

AWAKENING THE TRUTH WITHIN

AN ADVANCED DAWAH TRAINING COURSE



FAHAD TASLEEM



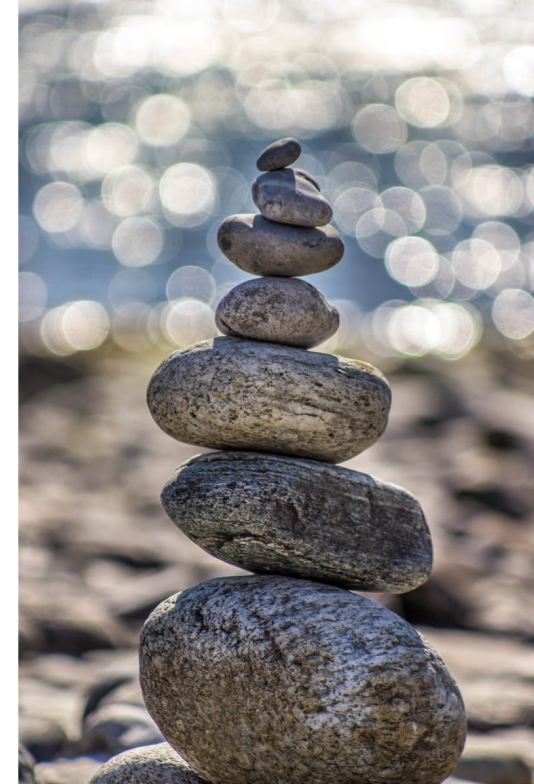
SAPIENCE
INSTITUTE



HAMZA
ANDREAS TZORTZIS

What we will cover during this course

1. Defining “da’wah”
2. Why da’wah
3. The virtues and rewards
4. Knowing the One we call to
5. Understanding the one we invite
6. The characteristics on the caller
7. Initiation: passive, active and advanced
8. The 6 main approaches to awakening the truth within
 - a. Rational arguments
 - b. Critical thinking
 - c. Revelation
 - d. Experience
 - e. Character
 - f. Spirituality
9. The fitrah unclouded and post-shahada advice.



1. Defining Da'wah

“Da’wah”

- The word **دعوة** comes from the triliteral stem
 - “To call, to invite”

http://lexicon.quranic-research.net/data/08_d/072_dEw.html

→ **وَادْعُوا** شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

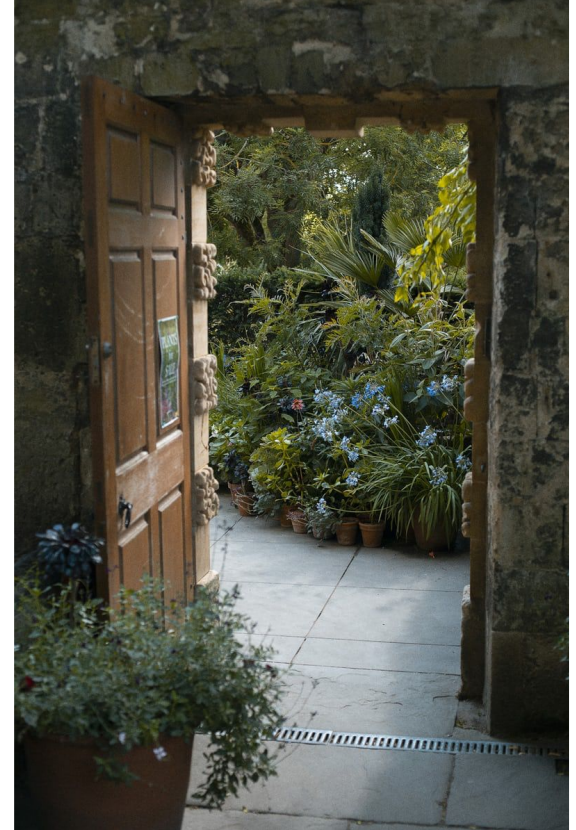
And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah , if you should be truthful.

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 23

→ **يَدْعُونَ** إِلَى النَّارِ

Those invite [you] to the Fire

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 221



“Da’wah”

- وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.

The Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 104

- ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ
Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.

The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 125



Invitation to the way of Allah

- ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ
 - “Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 125*
- وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
 - “And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 104*

What is the way of Allah?

الله

- وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
 - “And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, saying, ‘Worship Allah and avoid the false deities.’”
The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 36

- لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
 - “We had certainly sent Noah to his people, and he said, ‘O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a tremendous Day.’”
The Qur'an, Chapter 7, Verse 59

Key Objectives

- **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE**
- **Primarily your da'wah should be focussed on people affirming and internalising that it is only Allah that is worthy of worship:**
 - That they single out and direct all acts of worship to Allah alone
 - That Prophet Muhammad is the one to be followed, obeyed and used as an example.
- **SECONDARY OBJECTIVE:**
- **You should also seek to bring people close to the above:**
 - Decreasing hatred towards Islam
 - Increasing an appreciation of Islam
 - Showcasing the superiority of Islamic ethics and values

2. Why Da'wah

It's an obligation

- “Say: This is my way and I invite to Allah with insight ...”
The Qur'an, Chapter 12, Verse 108
- “Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”
The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 125
- “Let there be a group among you who call ‘others’ to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil—it is they who will be successful.”
The Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 104

بَصِيرَةٌ

Its an obligation

- “O Messenger, convey what was revealed from your Lord.”
The Qur'an, Chapter 5, Verse 67
- “You are the best nation raised up for humankind. You enjoin righteousness, forbid corruption and you believe in Allah.”
The Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 110
- “Convey from me, even if it be only a single verse.”
Narrated by Bukhari

بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً

3. The virtues & rewards

The best wealth

“For Allah to guide someone by your hand is better for you than having red camels.”

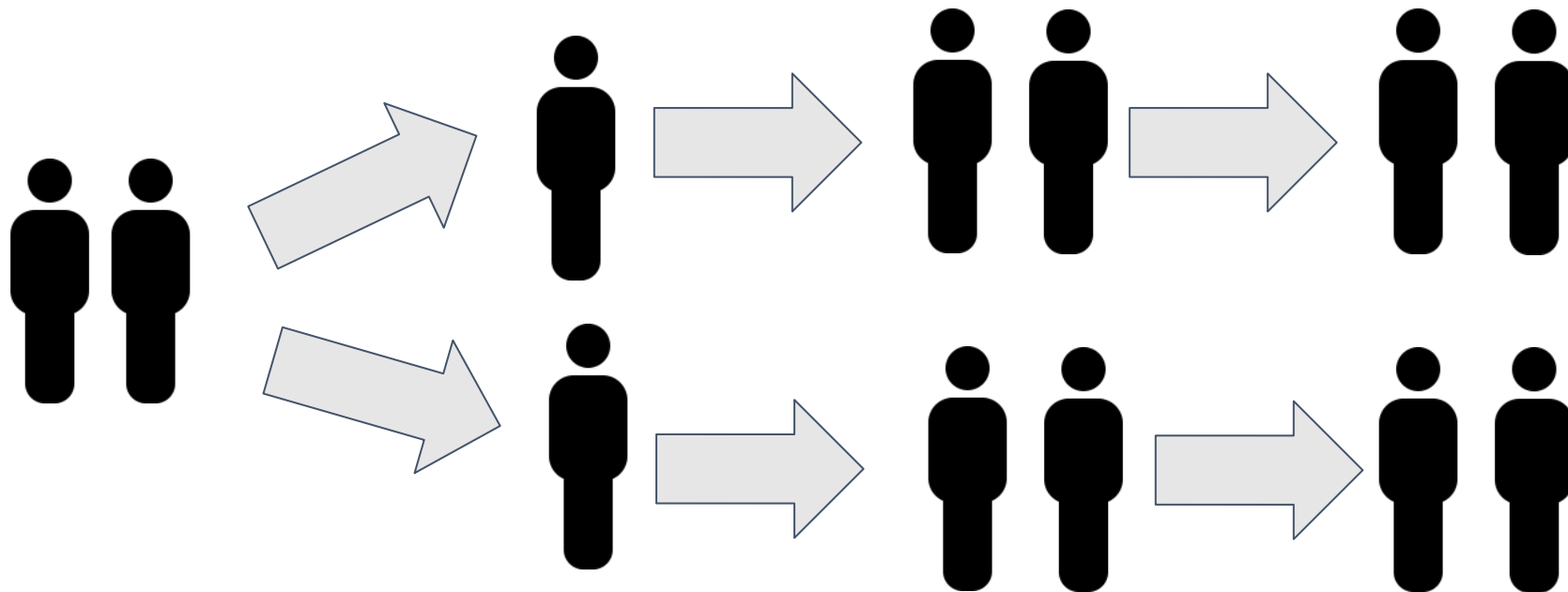
Narrated by Bukhari



Immense reward

“Whoever calls to guidance will receive the same reward as the one who follows him without any decrease in the reward of [his follower].”

Narrated by Muslim



The best people

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, does righteous deeds and says indeed I am among the Muslims.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 41, Verse 33



The greatest struggle

فَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

“and strive against them with the Qur’an a great striving.”

The Qur’an, Chapter 25, Verse 52

- This means that the greatest striving/struggle is using the arguments of the Qur’an.

Ibn al-Qayyim

Self-defining

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

- “None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.”
 - In another narration, “Until he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself.”
Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim
- “Love of the people/humanity (lin-nās) what you love for yourself.”
Narrated by Bukhari, Tariikh al-Kabīr
 - Committed to the wellbeing, goodness and guidance of all people.
 - Nawawi, Ibn Daqīq al-Eid, etc.

Stronger connection with the Qur'an

- Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Qur'an refers to stories.
 - These stories are centred on calling to Divine oneness and His Divinity.
 - Reading, studying and understanding a story will bring benefit.
- However, traversing the path of dawah will make you internalise these lesson.
 - Learning how my mum cooks my favourite sweet dish will not be the same as actually tasting it.

Do you want to have a stronger, experiential connection with the Qur'an?

Develop your empathy

إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ النَّاسِ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ جَعَلَ الْفَرَاشُ وَهَذِهِ الدَّوَابُّ الَّتِي تَقَعُ فِي النَّارِ يَقَعْنَ فِيهَا فَجَعَلَ يَنْزِعُهُنَّ وَيَعْلِبْنَهُ فَيَقْتَحِمْنَ فِيهَا فَأَنَا آخِذٌ بِحُجُرُكُمُ عَنِ النَّارِ وَهُمْ يَقْتَحِمُونَ فِيهَا

“Verily, the parable of myself and the people is that of a man who kindled a fire. When it lighted what was around it, moths and insects started falling into the fire. The man tried to pull them out, but they overcame him and rushed into it. I take hold of your belts to keep you from falling in, yet you rush into it.”

Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim

4. Knowing the One we call to

Knowing God

“So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 47, Verse 19

- Oneness of His Creative Power:
 - God is the sole, unique creator, sustainer, maintainer and owner of everything that exists.
- Oneness of His Names and Attributes:
 - God's names and attributed are unique, transcendent and they are maximally perfect. They have no deficiency or flaw and are to the highest degree possible.
- Oneness of His Divinity:
 - God is worthy of our worship. He is worthy of our obedience, love, prayers, praise and thanks. He is the only deity worthy of worship. All acts of worship are singled out, and dedicated to Him alone.

The gravest sin

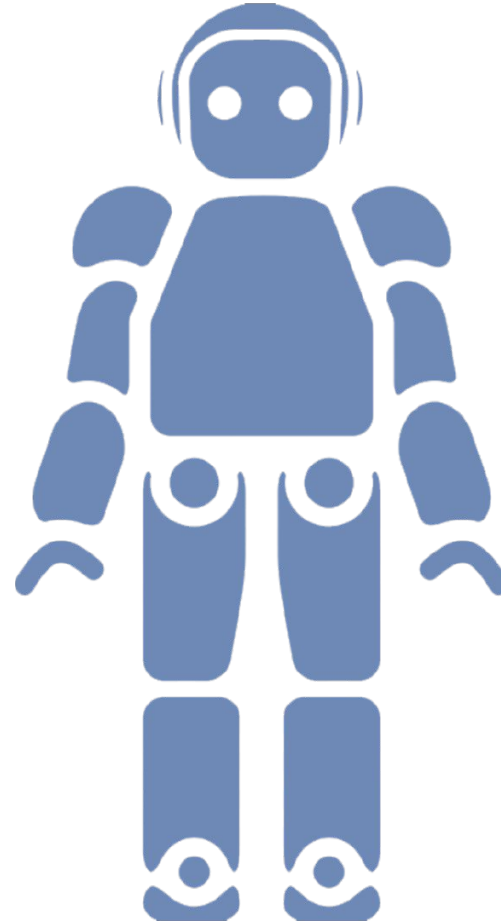
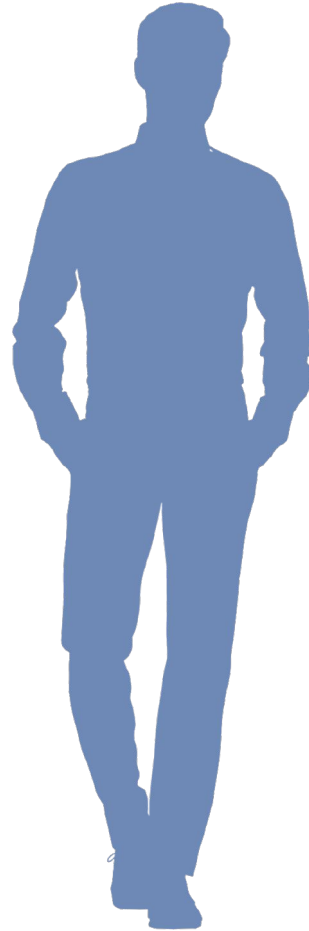
- Associating partners with God is the gravest sin. The consequence of this sin is that the one who dies in such a state and has not repented dies in a state of disbelief. They will not be forgiven.
 - *This applies to major forms of associating partners with God. There are lesser forms that do not lead to disbelief. However, major forms of associating partners with God such as praying to other than Him and believing other things are worthy of worship lead to disbelief.*
- “Indeed, God does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with God has certainly committed a tremendous sin.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 25, Verses 68 and 70*
- “And those who invoke not any other deity along with God... Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds; for those, God will change their sins into good deeds, and God is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 23, Verses 99 and 100*

5. Understanding the one we invite

Functionalism vs. Dawah Holism

Aql, Nafs,
Ruh, Qalb,
Fitrah.

Ability to
contemplate,
reflect, feel.



Programmed.

Input – output,
without reflection
or contemplation.

No feelings or
emotions.

Why treat human beings as if they are robots?

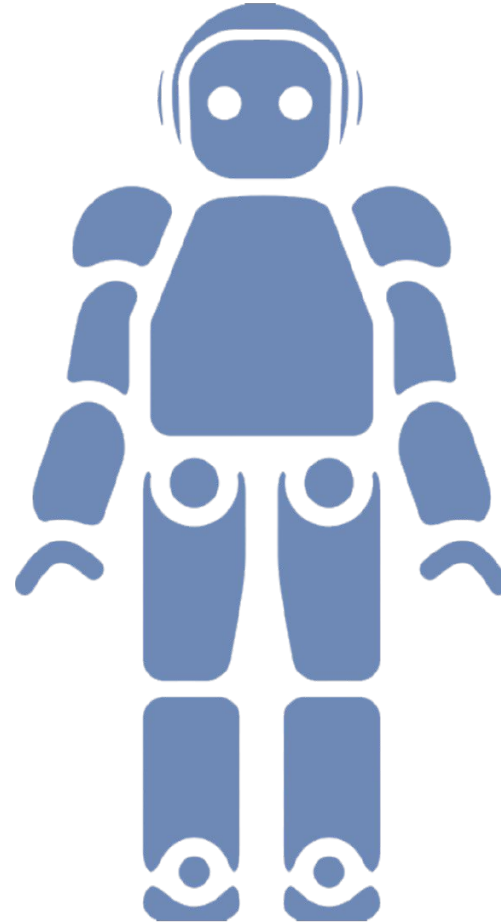
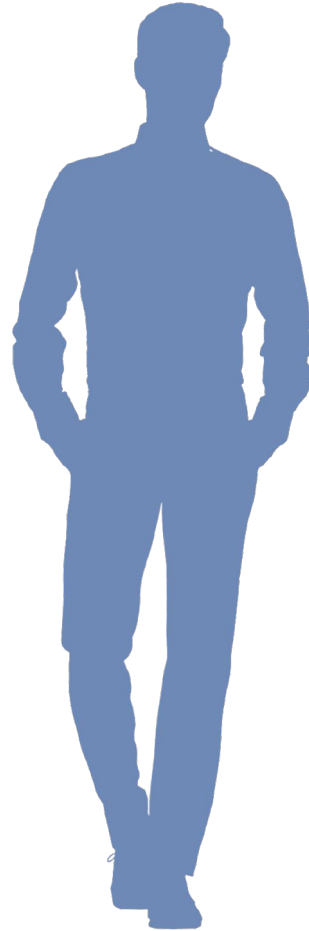
Know the human

- Dawah Functionalism:
 - A functionalist approach to the dawah addresses the human being with a mind that functions as a series of inputs and outputs. Similar to a computer.
 - The assumption is that dawah is based on abstract rational arguments, and they are sufficient to produce the results. Similar to an algorithm.
 - This approach fails to address the human in a holistic way. Human beings are not only rational. In fact, there is a dynamic interplay between emotions, psychology, cognitive faculties, etc.
- Dawah holism:
 - A holistic approach to the dawah addresses the human being as he is. Allah knows the human being better than we do. He created us.
 - The human being is an aql (intellect), qalb, fītrah, nafs, body and ruh.

Functionalism vs. Dawah Holism

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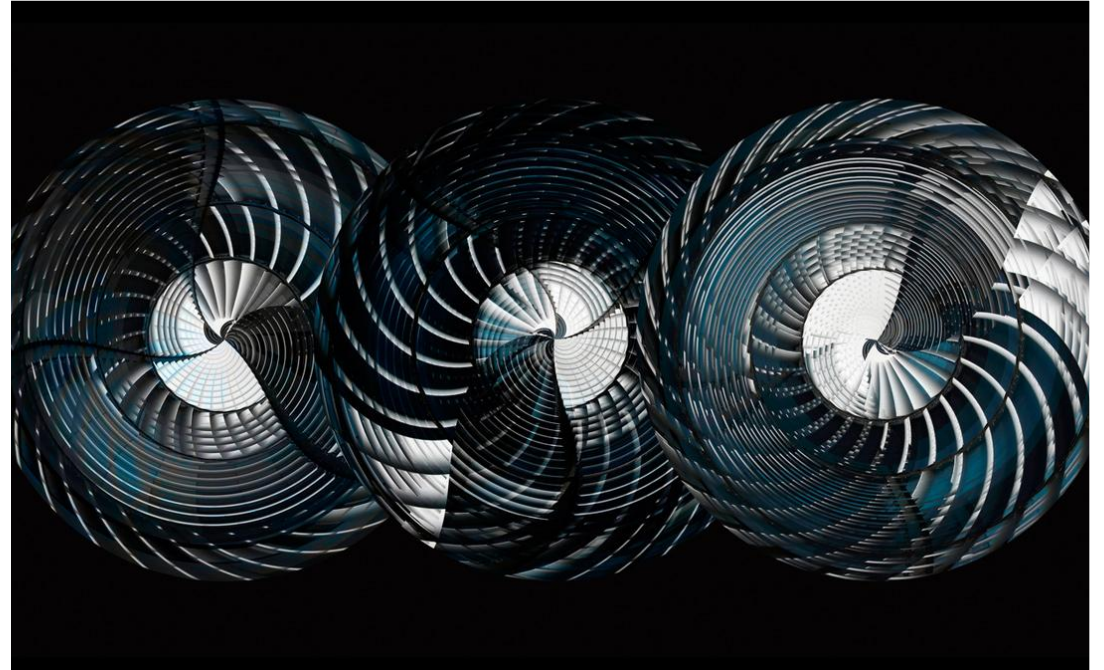
Rationality & Worldviews

Rational AI Machine → Can Islam answer every question rationally?

Supra-Rational → فطرة

Rational → عقل

Irrational → غير عقلي



Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Working Definition: “*The original normative disposition*”

- “Original”
 - The word comes from the Arabic trilateral stem fa-ṭa-ra (ف ط ر).

أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Can there be any doubt about God, Originator of the heavens and Earth?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 14, Verse 10*

Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Working Definition: “*The original normative disposition*”

- “Normative”
 - The word is an اسم الهيئة
 - The way you do something or the way something is done. (e.g. “Qiblah”, “Khilqah”, “Jilsah”)
 - Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said “No child is born but that he is upon the fitrah. His parents make him a Jew, or a Christian, or Magian. As an animal delivers a child with limbs intact, do you detect any flaw?” *Sahih Muslim*

Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Working Definition: “*The original normative disposition*”

- “Normative” - i.e. there can be a deviation from it.

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ

مُسْتَقِيمٍ ٢٢

“Then is one who walks upside down on his face better guided or one who walks upright on a straight path?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 67, Verse 22*

Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Working Definition: “*The original normative disposition*”

- “Normative” - i.e. there can be a deviation from it.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾

“And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], "Be grateful to Allah ." And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor] - then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 31, Verse 12*

Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Working Definition: “*The original normative disposition*”

- “Normative”

فَاقْمْ وَّجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا
تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

“So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah . That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 30, Verse 30

Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Working Definition: “*The original normative disposition*”

- “Disposition”

Two main views:

- The fitrah contains primary, inborn knowledge of: God’s existence, that He deserves to be worshipped, and some basic morals.
- The fitrah does not contain knowledge, rather it directs one towards the truth i.e. a ‘potency’ disposed towards the recognition of God, primed to worship Him.

Innate Disposition: Fitrah

Kufr → “Covering”

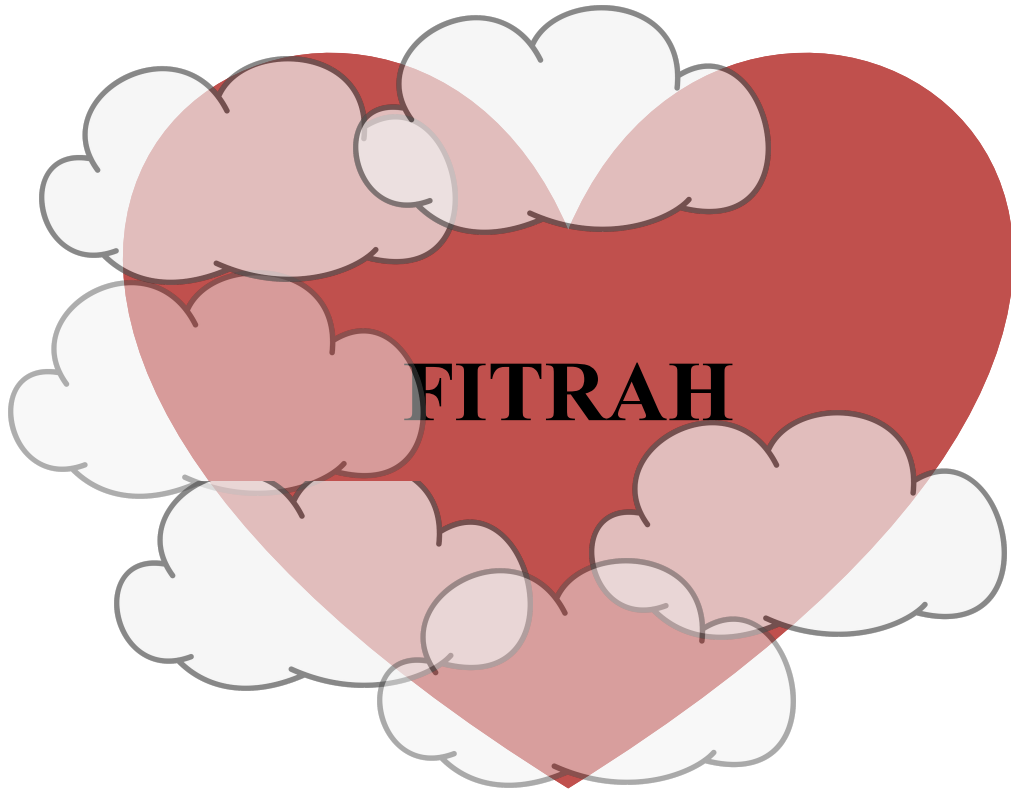
Fitrah becomes “covered” or “clouded”

Reasons for clouding:

- Environment
- Parents (see earlier hadith) or other people/devils: إني خلقت عبادي حنفاءً كلهم
- Sins (black dot upon the heart)

وَلَقَدْ ءَاثَيْنَا لُقْمَنَ الْحَكِيمَ أَنْ أَشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾

What is the purpose of Dawah?

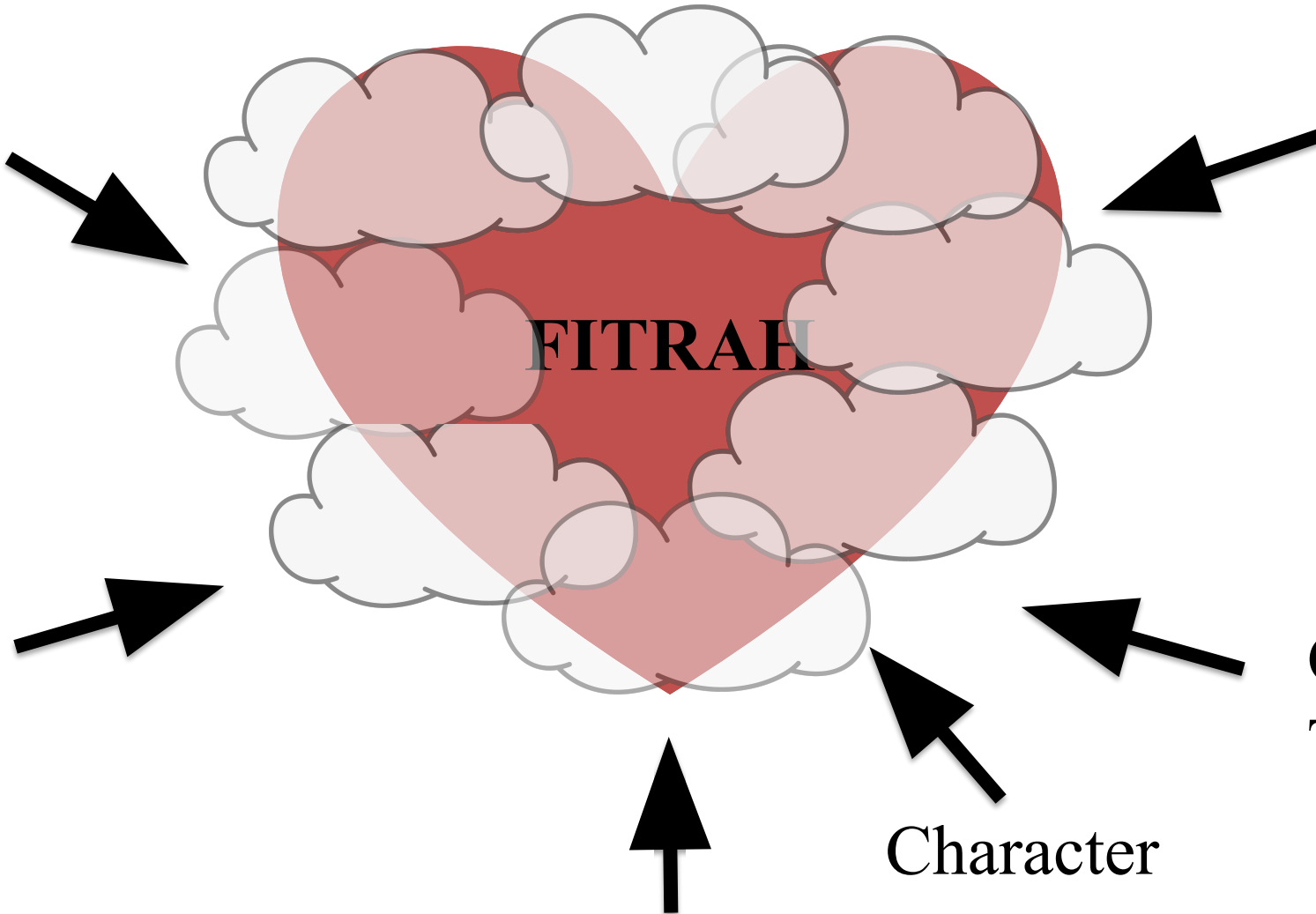


The Original Normative Disposition (i.e.) of the Human Being is to recognize Allah and worship Him. Therefore, Daw'ah is to invite people to come back to their original, normal state. We do this by “unclouding” the Fitrah.

Awakening the truth within

Revelation

Quranic beauty
Meaning
Verses
Tadabbur



Experiences

Natural beauty
Trauma
Positive
experiences
Human
relationships

Rational Arguments

Critical Thinking

Character

Spirituality

Directing towards the truth



- Revelation
- Experience
- Rational arguments
- Reflection and introspection
- Spirituality

6. The characteristics of the caller

What were the first 3 passages revealed? 3 pillars of leadership

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. “Read, in the name of your Lord..” [<i>Al-Alaq</i> 96:1] | ➡ | Knowledge |
| 2. “Stand up and warn” [<i>Al-Muddathir</i> 74:2] | ➡ | Activism/Da’wah |
| 3. “Pray at night, even if a little” 73: 2 [<i>Al-Muzammil</i>] | ➡ | Worship |



Knowledge: stick to what you know

“Say, ‘This is my way; I *invite to Allah* with *deep insight*, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him.’”

The Qur'an, Chapter 12, Verse 108

بَصِيرَةٌ

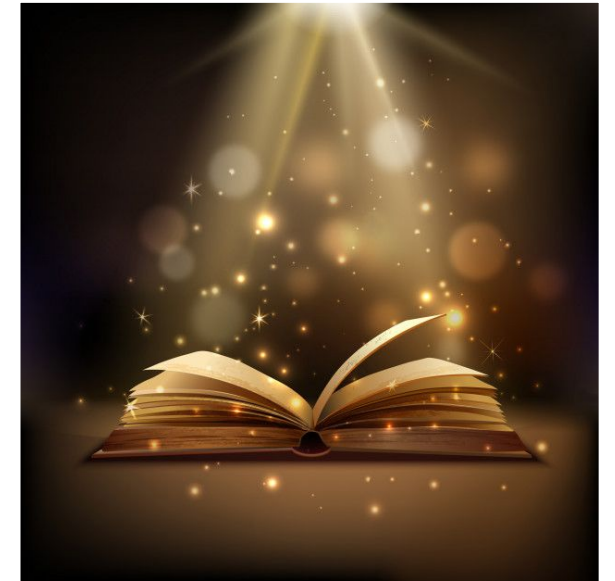
- Sapience = insight, wisdom, profound knowledge.
- Root word implications (Lane's Lexicon):
 - *Endowed with mental perception. The perceptive faculty of the mind. Argument, proof. Deep, profound knowledge to share Islam.*
 - “... the soul which perceives with inner sight (بَصِيرَةٌ) is of greater worth than the body which sees with ocular vision.” *Al-Ghazali*

Ethics

- “Indeed, I was only sent to complete the most noble of character traits.”
- “Surely you (Muhammad) have a magnificent character.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 68, Verse 4*
- “Indeed you have in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful example (of conduct)...” *The Qur'an, Chapter 33, Verse 21*
- “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor, he should be kind to his guest and he should either speak good or be silent.” *Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim*
- “Whoever would love to be delivered from Hellfire and admitted into Paradise, let him meet his end with faith in Allah and the Last Day, and let him treat people as he would love to be treated.” *Narrated by Muslim*
- Abu Huraira reported: It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, pray against the idolaters!” The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Verily, I was not sent to invoke curses, but rather I was only sent as mercy.” *Sahih Muslim*

Wisdom

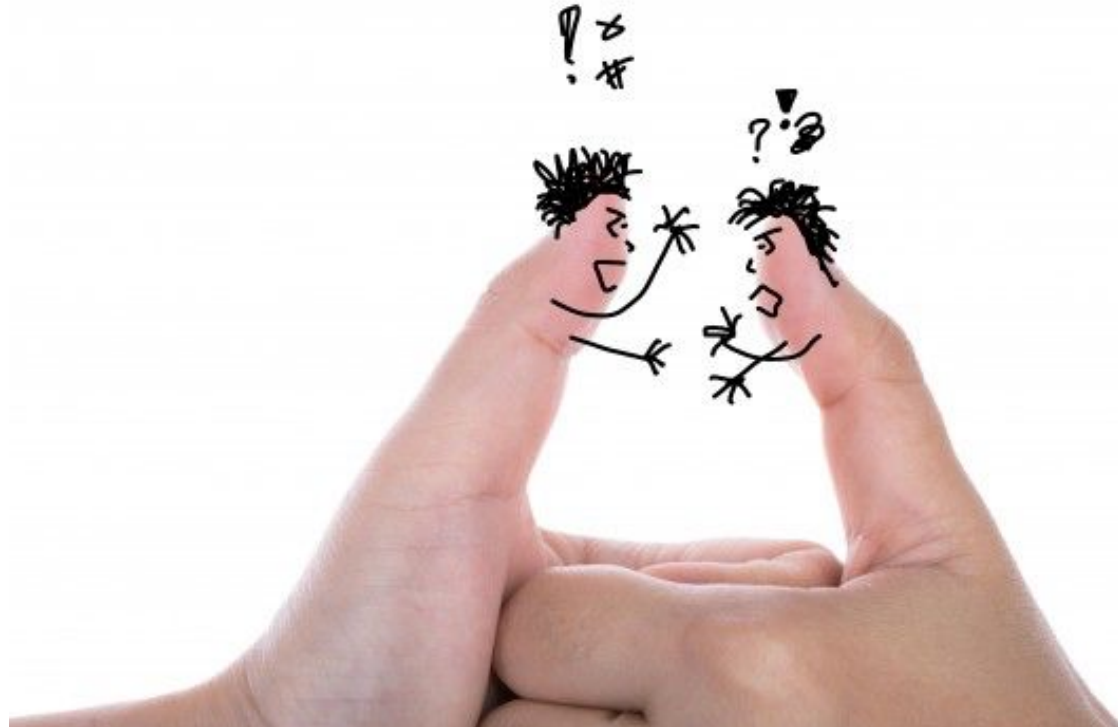
- “Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom ...”
The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 125
 - Some scholars maintain that wisdom implies the Quran and sunnah. *Ibn Katheer*
 - Saying the right thing, at the right time, in the right context and in the right way.
 - “Kitab and Hikma” → Emotional Intelligence of the Prophet (sws)



No useless arguments

“I guarantee a house on the outskirts of Paradise for one who leaves arguments even if he is right, and a house in the middle of Paradise for one who abandons lies even when joking, and a house in the highest part of Paradise for one who makes his character excellent.”

Sunan Abī Dāwūd (sahih)



Integrity

- What you say is what you do
- You keep your word
- You are your word
- Your word is your identity...
- You are trustworthy
- You are sincere



“How despicable it is in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do!”

The Qur'an, Chapter 61, Verse 3

Patience

- “And seek help through **patience and prayer**, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 45*
- “O you who have believed, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 200*
- “Indeed, Allah is with the patient.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 153*
- “Your responsibility is only to convey [the message] and the accounting is on Me.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 13, Verse 40*
- “And be patient, [O Muhammad], and your patience is not but through Allah. And do not grieve over them and do not be in distress over what they conspire.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 127*

Courage

- You are assertive and strong in the face of adversity, challenges and obstacles

*Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, confirmed the bravery of the Prophet ﷺ with an incident that happened to the people of Madeenah. One night, they were terrified when they heard a loud noise, so they set out to know the cause of it. On their way, they were met by the Prophet ﷺ, who was riding a horse, carrying his sword, ready to defend the people against any intruders. He comforted the people of Madeenah, saying: **“Don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid.”** Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim*



Ego is the enemy

- The ego says:
 - “I want to be right, I never want to be wrong”
 - “I want to look good, I never want to look bad”
 - “I want to impose, I don’t want to be imposed upon”
 - To the extent that you reject the truth and what is right!
- The ego prevents:
 - Unity
 - Achieving the best results
 - Doing what is right
 - Achieving your vision
 - Trust
 - Integrity

[Allah] said, “O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands? Were you arrogant [then], or were you [already] among the haughty?” He said, “I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.” The Qur’an, Chapter 38, Verses 75 and 76

Sincerity

- “Verily, deeds are only by intentions.”

Narrated by Bukhari

- “Verily, the people will only be raised for judgment based on their intentions.”

Ibn Majah (Sahih)

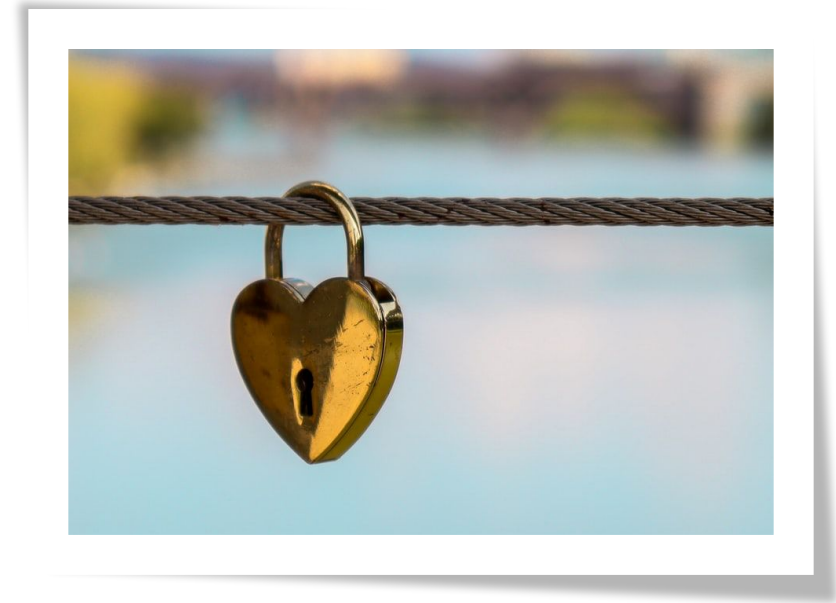
- “O people, make your deeds sincere for Allah Almighty. Verily, Allah does not accept any deed unless it is sincerely for him. Do not say: This is for the sake of Allah, and this is for the sake of my relatives. Verily, it was done for your relatives and none of it was for Allah. Do not say: This is for the sake of Allah and for your sake. Verily, it was done for their sake and none of it was for Allah.”

Sunan al-Dāraqūṭnī (Sahih)

What does sincerity entail?

Allah, His reward & punishment

- Sincerity (ikhlās) entails that you single out the act of worship because:
 - You love Allah and He is worthy of the act
 - You seek His Divine reward
 - You want to protect yourself from the fire.
- Doing the action mainly one of these reasons is sufficient for ikhlas.
- However, doing with all three is best.



Developing sincerity

- Know the consequences of not having sincerity
 - *Deeds are meaningless without sincerity*
- Know the consequence of having sincerity
 - *Allah's acceptance; jannah*
- Know why Allah is worthy of worship
- Make dua
- Read the stories of pious people and their sincerity
- Do one good deed every day that no one knows apart from you and Allah
- Focus on the spiritual heart (dhikr, Quran, supergatory acts of worship, etc.)
- Appreciate the nature of your work is **public and in the spotlight**, repeat the du'a of Abu Bakr: **“O Allah, make me better than they think, forgive me what they don't know, and don't account me for what they say [in praise].”**



اجْعَلْنِي خَيْرًا مِّمَّا يَظُنُّونَ، وَاعْفِرْ لِي مَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ، وَلَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا يَقُولُونَ

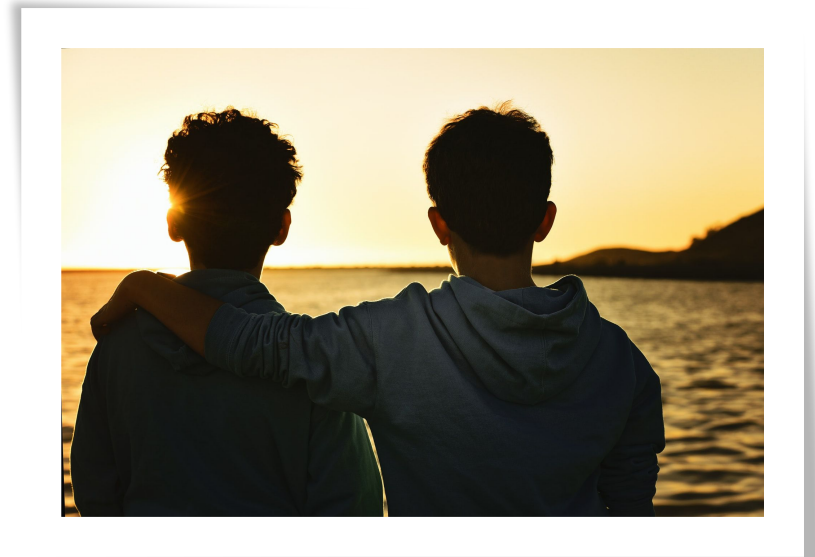
Compassion and kindness

“A servant has failed and lost if Allah has not placed mercy in his heart towards humanity.”

Tārīkh Dimashq (hasan)

“The merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth and the One in the heavens will have mercy upon you.”

Sunan al-Tirmidhī (sahih)



Soft heart

“It is out of Allah’s mercy that you ‘O Prophet’ have been lenient with them. Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you.”

The Qur’an, Chapter 3, Verse 159

“Speak to him gently, so perhaps he may be mindful ‘of Me’ or fearful ‘of My punishment’.”

The Qur’an, Chapter 20, Verse 44



Gentleness

“Whenever gentleness is in a thing it beautifies it and whenever it is withdrawn from something it defaces.”

Narrated by Muslim

“One deprived of gentleness is deprived of all good.”

Narrated by Muslim



No harshness

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 16, Verse 125

- “Arguing with them in a way that is better means using the best method of argumentation which is the method of kindness and gentleness without gruffness and harshness.”

Al-Zamakhshari, J. (2009). Tafsir al-Kashshaaf 'an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil. Edited by Khalil Shayhaa. Beirut: Darul Marefah, p. 588.

Mildness

“And speak to him mildly; perhaps he might accept admonition.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 20, Verse 44

- The exegete Al-Qurtubi explains that this verse implies that if Moses were commanded to speak softly and mildly to Pharaoh, who was an oppressor, then imagine how we must speak to others:

“If Musa was commanded to speak mildly to Pharaoh then it is even more appropriate for others to follow this command when speaking to others and when commanding the good and forbidding the evil.”

Al-Qurtubi, M. (2006). Al-Jaami' al-Ahkaam al-Qur'an, p. 65.

- However there are times, contingent on moral context, to be assertive, read the verses that continue.

Forbearance

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي
بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ



“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel evil by that deed which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity will become as though he were a devoted friend.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 41, Verse 34

- The beautiful teaching of this verse is that in the original Arabic the word ‘repel’ is not followed by a direct object. This implies that we must repel anything by that which is better.
 - The scholars have said that this means that we must respond to anything by that which is more virtuous and more beautiful.

Clear communication

“The Messenger’s duty is only to deliver ‘the message’ clearly.”

The Qur’an, Chapter 24, Verse 54



Speak in a manner people understand

“And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray [thereby] whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 14, Verse 4

‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Speak to the people according to their level of understanding. Do you wish that Allah and His Messenger be denied?”

Narrated by Bukhari

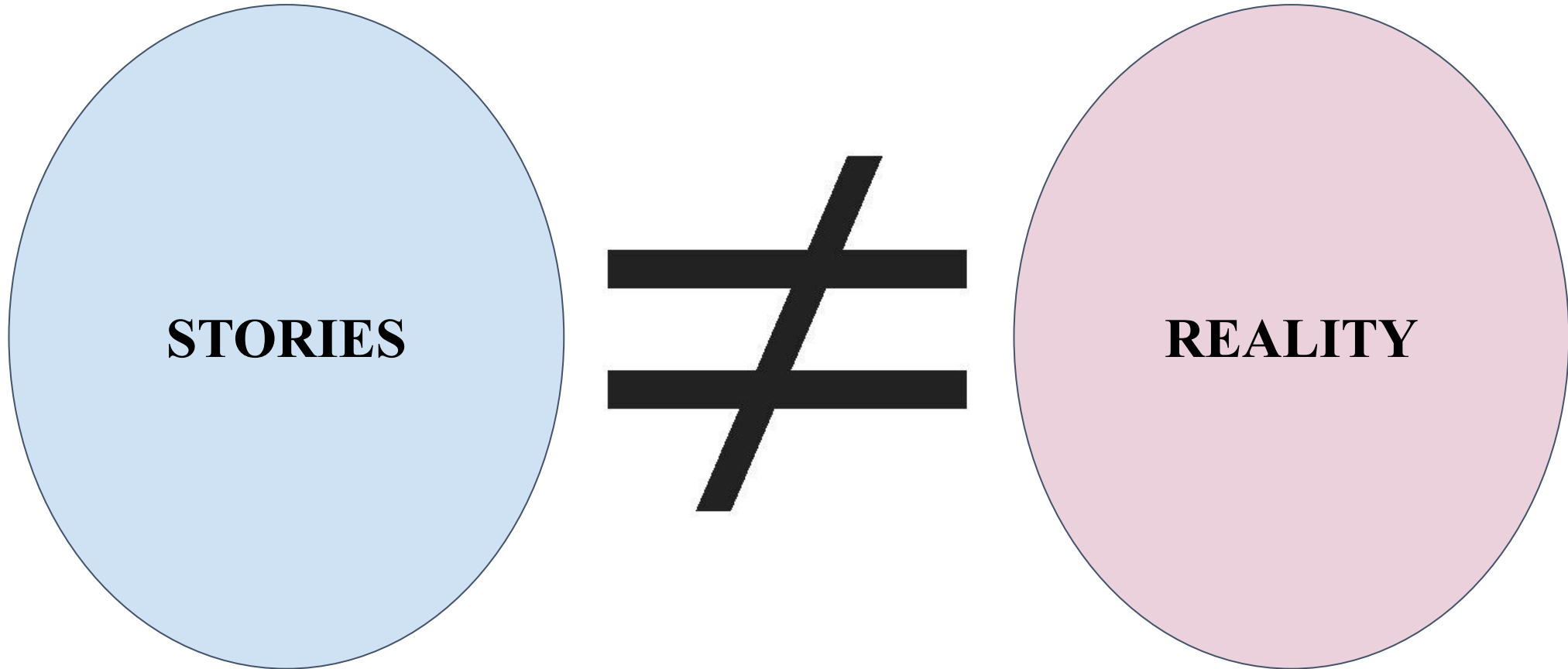
Listen with the intention to understand

- Do not manufacture a response whilst someone is talking.
- Do not read into their words.
 - Turn off your ‘internal radio’.
 - Words are vehicles for meaning.
- If in doubt, ask “*What do you mean by that?*”



Know that truly understanding someone will aid your discussions and the strategy you will adopt.

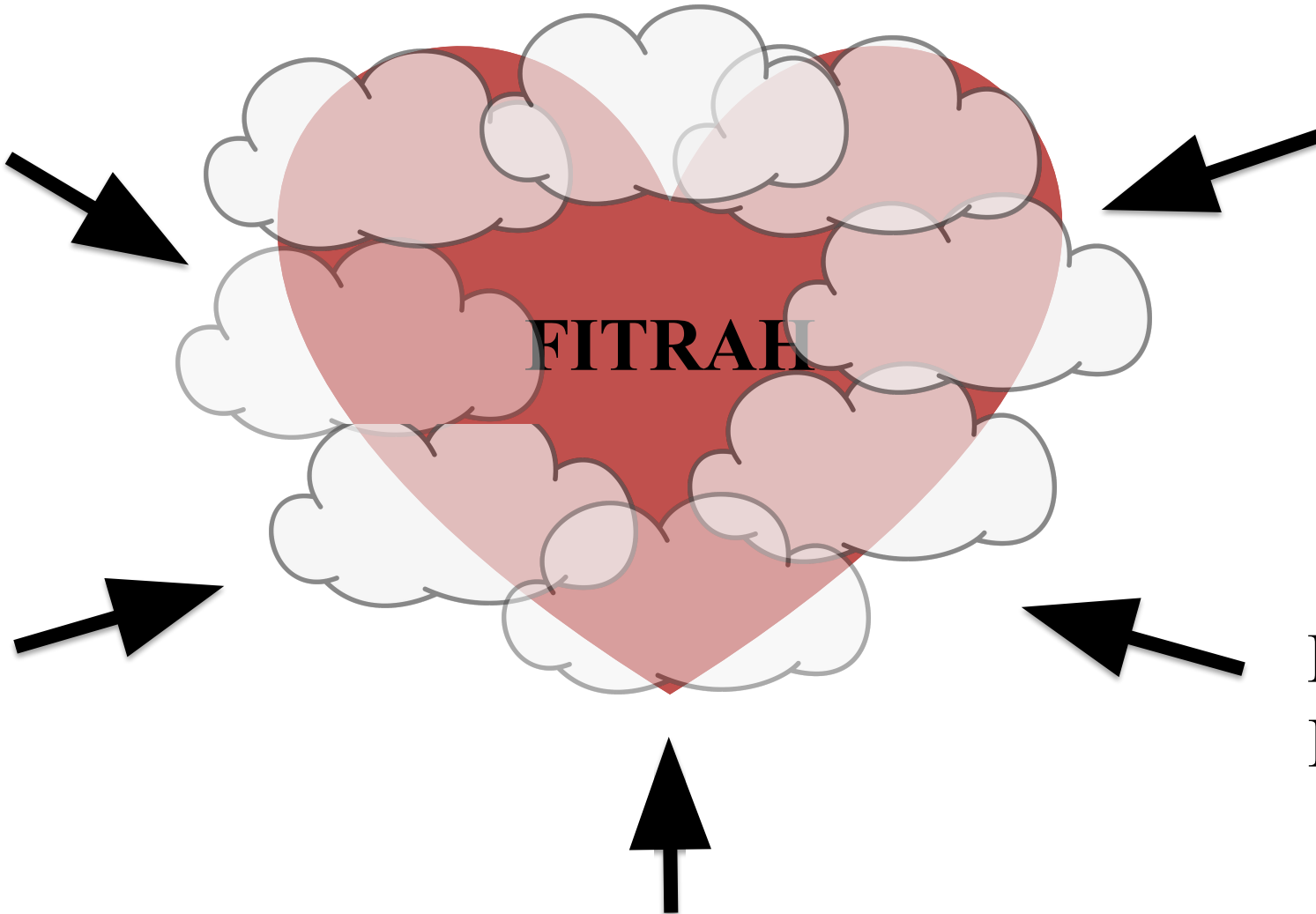
No stories



Main Approaches to uncloud the fitrah

Revelation

Quranic beauty
Meaning
Verses
Tadabbur



1. Rational
Arguments

Experiences

Natural beauty
Trauma
Positive
experiences
Human
relationships

Reflection &
Introspection

Spirituality

#1 Rational Arguments



What is initiation?

- Initiation in the context of **#1 Rational Arguments** acts as a ‘bridge’ between any type of conversation and linking it to the **intellectual foundations of Islam**.
- There three types of initiation: *passive*, *active* and *advanced*
 - **Passive initiation** involves when someone asks you a question and you link it to the foundations of Islam, without specifically answering the question.
 - **Active initiation** is when you ask a question or proactively engage in a conversation.
 - **Advanced initiation** is when you answer a specific question and then link that answer to the foundations of Islam.



Why initiation?

- People understand morality, ethics, law and related topics through the ‘lenses’ of a particular philosophy or worldview.
 - If one’s lenses are yellow, they will see yellow.
 - If their lenses are green, they will see green.



Benefits of initiation

- One answer to most questions.
- Allows people to see the world the way believers see the world.
- Puts a stop to people requiring a specific answer to every question.
- Prevents useless argumentation and debates.
- Provide a foundation for which the person can evaluate the truth of Islam.
 - *Whatever comes from truth is true!*
- Evokes the realisation that we have epistemic limitations.
- It reflects the essence of Islam: peaceful submission to God.

Passive initiation

- There are three steps:

- Character
- Concept
- Agreement
 - Yes/No
 - I want answer, not the concept

**“In order for you to understand
the answer you have understand
the concept of Islam.”**

Active initiation

- There are 3 steps:
 - Engage (positive engagement)
 - Explain your case, do not justify
 - Concept
 - Agreement



Advanced initiation

- There are 3 steps:
 - Answer
 - Concept
 - Agreement



The concept

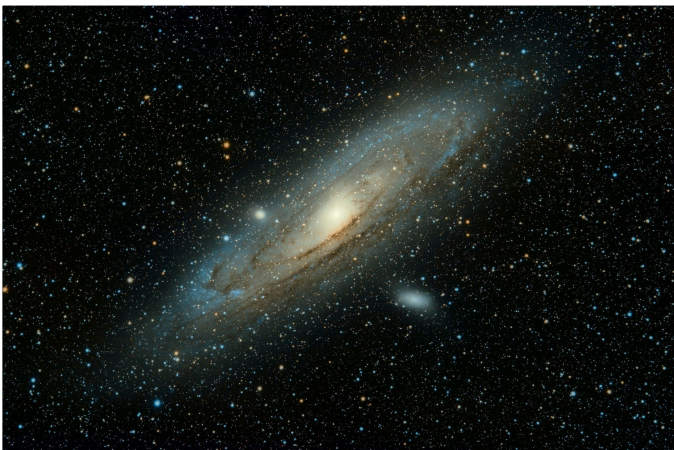
- The rational concept of Islam:
 - GORAP
 - God's existence
 - Oness
 - Revelation
 - Adoration
 - Prophethood



God's existence

- Possible arguments:

- The Quranic argument for God's existence
- The argument from dependency (contingency)
- The argument from morality

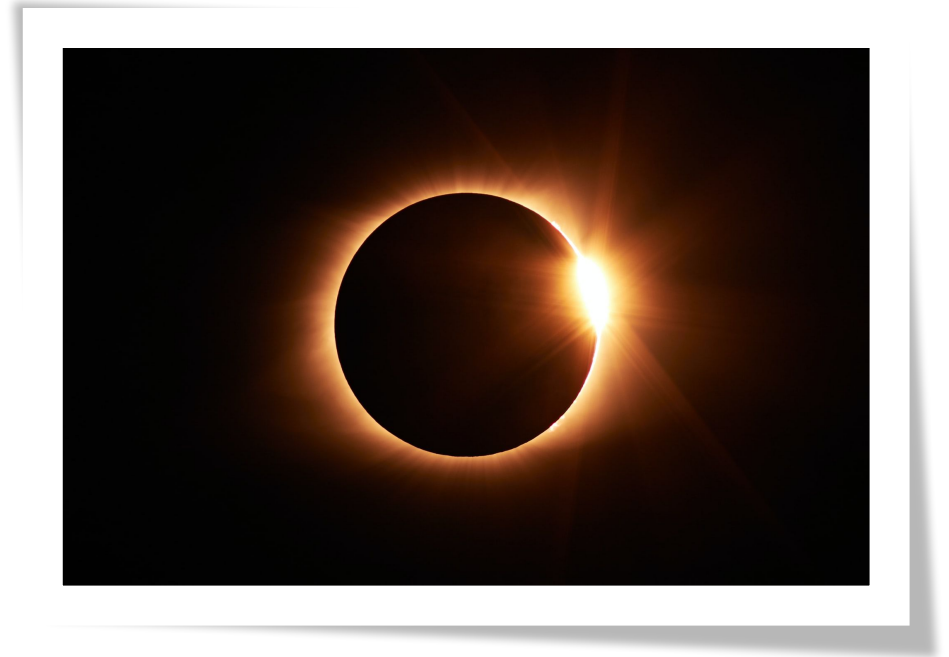


- Possible structure:

- First principle:
 - *why is there something rather than nothing?*
- Argument: contingency argument
- Agreement: *does this make sense?*

Oneness

- Possible arguments:
 - Conceptual differentiation
 - The argument from exclusion
 - The Quranic argument
- Possible structure:
 - First principle/question:
 - *Can you have two independent wills?*
 - Argument: argument from exclusion
 - Agreement: *does this make sense?*



Revelation

- Possible arguments:
 - The inimitability of the Qur'an
 - The structural coherence of the Qur'an
 - The timeless nature of the Qur'an
- Possible structure:
 - Necessity of revelation:
 - *One absolute will and will has created a universe that is fit for our existence. The laws of physics and the arrangement of our galaxy is facilitates complex, conscious life. We have an ability to think and feel. We, unlike animals, cannot just rely on our instincts. In someway we are cosmic orphans asking the question why, and when we use our rational faculties we can come to conclusions. All of this seems to be God's way of directing us to Him. He has give us the environment and the tools to find Him. God is obviously invested in our flourishing. It makes sense He sent us an external revelation, like a book. And if its come from the creator, the necessary being, it must be miraculously timeless, because He create physical time...*
 - Argument: the timeless nature of the Qur'an
 - Agreement: *does this make sense?*

Adoration

- Linked to revelation.
 - Abstract arguments...
- You affirm the purpose of human existence: *to worship Allah*.
 - To know Allah
 - To love Allah
 - To obey Allah
 - To direct all acts of worship to Allah alone
- Possible structure:
 - Step 1: Purpose: Since the revelation from God is the Quran, the Quran tells us that our main purpose in life is to worship God. Worship: know, love, obey and directing all acts of worship to Allah alone.
 - Step 2: God's nature:
 - *He is worthy of worship by virtue of who He is*
 - *He is the Perfectly Loving*
 - *He Created us*
 - Step 3: Conclusion: God is worthy of extensive praise, ultimate gratitude and our love, we we must intend to worship Him.
 - Forms of worship and keys to acts of worship (expressions of gratitude and praise)

Why is God worthy of worship?

1. God's right to worship is a necessary fact of His existence:

“Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 20, Verse 14*

2. God has created and also sustains everything:

“O mankind, remember the favour of God upon you. Is there any creator other than God who provides for you from the heaven and Earth? There is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 35, Verse 3*

3. God is the Most Loving:

“He is The Forgiving, The Loving.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 85, Verse 14*

“And [yet], among the people are those who take other than God as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love God. But those who believe are stronger in love of God.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 165*

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “God is more affectionate to His servants than a mother to her children.” *Narrated by Abu Dawud*

Prophethood

- Revelation proves Prophethood
- This can link to GORAP
- Or it can be stand alone argument
- Structure:
 - Need for the Prophet:
 - How do we worship God? How do we understand revelation and apply it in our daily lives?
How to we fulfil our purpose in life?
 - Proof:
 - The argument for the Prophet
 - Agreement:
 - Does this make sense so far?



#2 Critical Thinking



What is critical thinking?

- Definitions of critical thinking correspond to generating, defending, and challenging arguments or claims.
 - So to critically think, you should be able to generate strong arguments, defend arguments, and challenge weak or false arguments.
 - In the context of generating good arguments we should avoid errors in our reasoning. In other words, avoid logical fallacies.
 - In the context of challenging weak arguments we should be able to recognise logical fallacies.
- An argument has premises and a conclusion.
 - The premises are usually the reasons people provide to why they believe in something or not.
 - Premises can be challenged and fallacious arguments often have false assumptions.
 - Conclusions can also be challenged. In other words the logical validity.

Logical fallacies

- A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning that renders an argument unsound or invalid.
 - Fallacies may not be applied in every case
- Formal and informal fallacies:
 - *Formal fallacies*: these are errors of the validity of an argument. In other words the conclusion does not logical follow from the premises or is not supported by them.
 - All cows are omnivores
 - All rabbits are omnivores
 - Therefore all cows are rabbits
 - *Informal fallacies*: these take many forms and they often involve arguments based on irrelevant information or based on assumptions. And when they are examined are proven to be incorrect.
 - Here are some examples of informal fallacies...

The Qur'an

- “He rebuked ‘them’, “Do you then worship—instead of God—what can neither benefit nor harm you in any way?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 21, Verse 66*
- “Shame on you and whatever you worship instead of God! Do you not have any sense?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 21, Verse 67*
- “When it is said to them, “Follow what God has revealed,” they reply, “No! We ‘only’ follow what we found our forefathers practicing.” ‘Would they still do so,’ even if their forefathers had ‘absolutely’ no understanding or guidance?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 170*
- “Do they associate ‘with God’ those ‘idols’ which cannot create anything, but are in fact created.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 7, Verse 191*

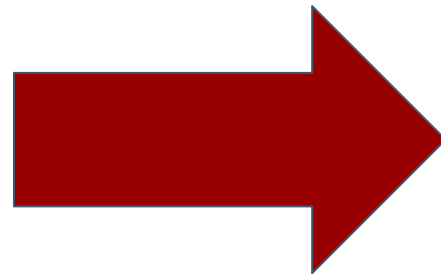
Keep on thinking!

- “God has never had ‘any’ offspring, nor is there any god besides Him. Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created, and they would have tried to dominate one another. Glorified is God above what they claim!” *The Qur’an, Chapter 23, Verse 91*
- Argument from exclusion:
 - There are two gods and they want to move a rock:
 - One wants to move the rock left and other right. One of them dominates and moves it in the direction they want. *One dominant will, therefore one God.*
 - The other scenario is that they both cancel each other out. *Not possible, because we have creation existing which means something has been willed.*
 - The final scenario is that they both move the rock in the same direction all the time. *In reality there is only one dominant will.*

How does critical thinking awaken the truth within?

- “And they will lament, “If only we had listened and reasoned, we would not be among the residents of the Blaze!” *The Qur'an, Chapter 67, Verse 10*
- “Surely in this are signs for those who reflect.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 13, Verse 13*
- “Do they not ever reflect on camels—how they were ‘masterfully’ created.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 88, Verse 17*
- “Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 47, Verse 24*
- “This ‘Quran’ is a ‘sufficient’ message for humanity so that they may take it as a warning and know that there is only One God, and so that people of reason may be mindful.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 14, Verse 52*

Reflection
Reasoning
Thinking



Truth

Necessary but not sufficient

Logical fallacies

- A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning that renders an argument unsound and invalid.
 - Fallacies may not be applied in every case
- Formal and informal fallacies
 - *Formal fallacies*: these are errors of the validity of an argument. In other words the conclusion does not logical follow from the premises or is not supported by them.
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 - *Informal fallacies*: these take many forms and they often involve arguments based on irrelevant information or based on assumptions. And when they are examined are proven to be incorrect.
 - Here are some examples of informal fallacies...

Example 1: Appeal to accomplishment

- This is when an argument or claim is advanced (mainly to silence the opponent) based on merely the credentials of the one making the argument and not on the merits of the argument or claim.
 - Form:
 - P is true because the person making the claim that p is impeccably accomplished.
 - Therefore p is true.
 - Example:
 - Look, I have PhD and published many papers, so believe me what I tell you that God doesn't exist.
 - Explanation:
 - The truth of that claim does not depend on the credentials or achievements of the one making the claim. Otherwise we will have to say that someone with more credentials entails they make more more truthful claims, which is clearly false. The person's claims have to be independently established with evidence.

Example 2: Appeal to consequences

- This is where speaker highlights a negative consequence of a particular proposition in order to try and show that the proposition in question is false.
 - Form:
 - Belief in p has negative consequences.
 - Therefore p is false.
 - Example:
 - Religion leads to disunity and war that is why I reject religion and this is exactly why it is false.
 - Explanation:
 - Arguing that a belief is false because it leads to negative consequences is irrelevant to the truth claim of that belief. The consequences of a belief do not alone determine the truth value of that belief. Is my belief that atheism leads to nihilism (that life has no ultimate meaning or purpose, and that it can lead to rejecting objective morality) a valid argument to show that atheism is false?

Example 3: Hypothesis contrary to fact

- This involves a speaker trying to prove something in the real world by invoking an imaginary or hypothetical example in the past.
 - Form:
 - If A did not happen, B would have not happened.
 - Example:
 - If you was not born in a Muslim household or country, you would have not been Muslim.
 - Explanation:
 - Perhaps. But it is equally possible that a someone being a Muslim is due to other factors, such as the evidence for Islam. Using imaginary hypotheticals are misleading because they do not establish anything about the real world.

Practical Approaches to using Critical Thinking: Scenario 1

“I believe in a purpose for my life and it’s the one that I decide to make up for myself.”

- *p is true because the one postulating p can make up p.*
- This is an error in reasoning. Just because you can make up a claim doesn’t make the claim true.
 - How do you know that the purpose in life you have made up is true? Isn’t that like saying: “let’s pretend to have purpose”? How does that make it any different from children playing in a playground and pretending to be cops and robbers?
 - Stand in the possibility that in order to have a purpose of life is true and meaningful that it should come from something external to us, that transcends our limitations. Maybe our purpose has been defined by the One who has created us?

Practical Approaches to using Critical Thinking: Scenario 2

“Your religion is false because it is backward”

- *p is has negative consequences, therefore p is false*
- This is an error in reasoning. The consequences of a belief do not alone determine the truth value of that belief.
 - Even if you think Islam leads to backwardness, does that mean it is false? I may think that liberalism leads to excessiveness individualism and selfishness in society, does that mean liberalism is not true? Maybe the link I have made between liberalism and social decay is false. Stand in the possibility that the link you have made between my religion and backwardness is false. Also, maybe what you consider backward is not actually backward and your attitude has been shaped by your likes and dislikes, which could also be false.

Practical Approaches to using Critical Thinking: Scenario 3

“Most educated and qualified scientists and philosophers are not religious or atheists, therefore religion is not for me”

- *p is true because the people making the claim that p are impeccably accomplished.*
- Just because there are educated people that are atheists and not religion doesn't make religion false.
 - This is an error in reasoning. You are assuming that the reason the educated people are not religious or atheist is because reason, education and critical thinking lead to atheist and disbelief. It could be that they are not religious and deny God because of other factors. Further, a belief is not true just because someone who is educated says it is not true, or doesn't believe in it. This is an appeal to accomplishment.
 - Stand in the possibility that they could not be believers due to reasons outside of their expertise, and realise that the truth of a religion is not based on the academic accomplishments of a person. The scientist's or philosopher's beliefs have to be independently established with evidence.

Critical thinking & sources of doubt

- Let us apply of critical thinking to two main sources of doubts:
 - Philosophical and scientific
 - Moral and ethical

Philosophical:

If the universe needs a creator then who created God

- *False assumption #1: **Falsely makes the universe and God the same.*** The universe began, God did not begin. Things that begin to exist require a cause, a creator or an explanation. God is eternal, He is not finite, therefore He was not caused or created.
- *False assumption #2: **Misapplies the principle of causality.*** It is NOT whatever exists has a cause, it is whatever begins to exist has a cause. God never began to exist.
- *False assumption #3: **The absurdity on an infinite regress of causes.***
 - Imagine creator X created the universe, and creator X was created by Y, and Y was created by Z and Z by ZX, and ZX by ZY, and that went on forever. Would this universe ever come into existence? No.
 - Because in order for the universe to exist there would have had to be a completion of an infinite regress of causes, but an infinite regress of causes is never complete. In other words, it would never end. And if the regress of causes never ends, the universe would never come into existence.

A Castle...

... with a 1000 rooms.



Epistemic status of scientific theories

- Realism:
 - well-confirmed, successful scientific theories are a representation of the actual state of affairs.
 - Fallible.
- Instrumentalism:
 - Successful theories are not a representation of the actual state of affairs and that they are “merely conceptual tools for classifying, systematizing and predicting observational statements.”
- Anti-realism:
 - well-confirmed, successful scientific theories are not a representation of the actual state.

“Science leads to atheism”

- This false assertion is based on four false assumptions:
 1. Assumption 1: Science is the only yardstick for truth
 2. Assumption 2: Since science works, its conclusions must be true
 3. Assumption 3: Science leads to certainty
 4. Assumption 4: Philosophical and methodological naturalism

1. Science is the only yardstick for truth

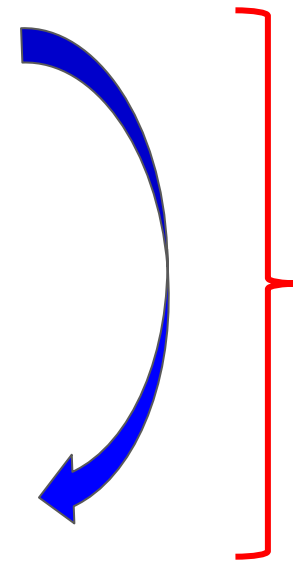
- Science has limitations:
 - limited to observation;
 - morally neutral;
 - cannot delve into the personal;
 - cannot answer why things happen;
 - cannot address some metaphysical questions;
 - There are other sources of knowledge (e.g. testimony);
 - cannot prove necessary truths (see next slide).

Necessary Truths

1. All bachelors are unmarried men
2. John is a bachelor
3. Therefore, John is an unmarried man

Necessary Truths

1. All bachelors are unmarried men
2. John is a bachelor
3. Therefore, John is an unmarried man



Logical relation
between the
premises and the
conclusion

2. Science works, its conclusions = true

- Workable theories can be false: phlogiston
- Theories work even when they contradict each other
 - “Historically, there are many cases of theories that we now believe to be false but that were empirically quite successful.” (Philosophy of Science, A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University)
 - “False models can sometimes work better than true ones” (Evidence and Evolution, Elliot Sober)

3. Science leads to certainty

- Problem of induction
 - There can always be a new observation that can be at odds with our conclusions based on our previous limited data
 - “Science is revisable. Hence, to talk of scientific ‘proof’ is dangerous, because the term fosters the idea of conclusions that are graven in stone.” (Gillian Barker and Philip Kitcher. *Philosophy of Science: A New Introduction*. Oxford University Press. 2014, p. 17)

Islamic Sources & Induction

- Contradiction?
 - This is a misplaced contention - a distinction should be made between inductive reasoning and inductive arguments. Inductive reasoning provides certainty for basic types of knowledge. For instance, if I observe X in Y, it follows that Y allows X (i.e. it mirrors the observation and simply states the facts – no conclusions).
 - This type of induction was used in the preservation of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. For example, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ heard the Qur'an, and he simply repeated what he had heard. He never made a conclusion for a verse that he never heard. For example, a companion wouldn't hear "Iyyaka na'abudu wa iyyaka nasta'een" (it is You we worship and it is You we ask for help) and then conclude "Qul huwa Allahu ahad" (Say, He is God, the uniquely One).

4. Philosophical Naturalism

- Assumes the non-scientific assumption of philosophical naturalism (the view that there is no supernatural and everything can be explained by physical processes)
 - “If you want a concession, I’ve always said that naturalism is an act of faith...” **Professor Michael Ruse**

4. Methodological Naturalism

- Why do scientific explanations do not refer to God in any way?
- Methodological naturalism:
 - For anything to be considered a scientific explanation it cannot refer to Divine power or creativity
 - This does not contradict God's existence or revelation
 - The physical causes are a manifestation of the Divine will

Methodological Naturalism ≠ Atheism

- “Of course the scientist, as an individual, is free to embrace a reality that transcends naturalism.” - **Evolutionary Biologist Scott C. Todd**
 - Science tells us the how not the why, knowing the how doesn't negate the why.

Science does NOT lead to atheism

- Science cannot observe God
- There are other sources of knowledge
- Conflation between methodological and philosophical naturalism
- Explaining how things work do not disprove that they have a creator

“Science disproves religion”

- This false assertion is based on the view that scientific conclusions are absolute and certain.
 - Observations and scientific conclusions are not the same

Darwinian Mechanism: Case Study

- Probabilistic
- Based on Assumptions
- Has Disputes

Probabilistic

- “We must acknowledge the possibility that new facts may come to light which will force our successors of the twenty-first century to abandon Darwinism or modify it beyond recognition.” **Richard Dawkins, A Devil’s Chaplain**

Assumptions

- Gradualism
 - Change is “steady, slow, and continuous.” - Charles Darwin
- Tree of life
 - “The history of life cannot properly be represented as a tree.”
Evolutionary Biologist, W. Ford Doolittle (Phylogenetic Classification and the Universal Tree 1999.)
- “All the central assumptions of Neo-Darwinism have been disproven.”
Oxford University Biologist, Denis Noble

Disputes

- Evolution by Natural Genetic Engineering
- Neo Lamarckian Evolution
- Mutation driven evolution

The Way Forward?

- Accept both!
 - How?
 - Darwinism is not accepted into one's belief / creed.
 - It is accepted practically as the best working model we have thus far.
 - It doesn't mean it is a representation of the actual state of affairs.

Ethical: Irrational and backward

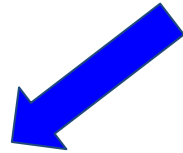
- *False reasoning*: Islam requires blind obedience to a God, therefore it is backward and oppressive
 - It is irrational and backward to blindly obey someone
 - Islam advocates blind obedience to God
 - Therefore, Islam is irrational and backward
- It is rational to unconditionally obey a maximally perfect being
- Islam advocates unconditional obedience to a maximally perfect being
- Therefore, Islam is rational

Moral Epistemology

- How do we know what is good?
 - The ontological basis for objective morals are God's commands.
 - Therefore, finding out what His commands are will facilitate moral knowledge.
- Islamic principles:
 - **God knows, we don't:** “And it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 216*
 - **Allah is *Al-Barr*, the source of all goodness:**
 - When God makes a moral command, it is a derivative of His will, and His will does not contradict His nature. Therefore, what God commands is good because He is good, and He defines what good is.
 - God has the totality of moral knowledge, we have fragments... if that.

Euthyphro's Dilemma

Is something morally good because God commands it, or does God command it because it is morally good?

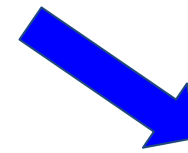


If morality is defined by God's commands...



Good and evil are arbitrary because God could command anything. There is nothing in the real world that would be considered objectively wrong.

ARBITRARINESS HORN



If morality is external to God's commands...



Moral standards are completely outside and independent of God's essence and nature. Therefore God is not required for objective morals.

**INDEPENDENT
STANDARD HORN**

Response

- There is a third possibility: God is good.
 - “There is a third alternative: a morally stable God of the kind found in scripture, a supreme being who would not arbitrarily change his mind about the goodness of compassion and the evil of sexual misconduct. Such a God always commands good because his character and nature are good.” *Professor of Philosophy Shabbir Akhtar, The Qur'an and the Secular Mind*

Response Further Explained

- There is indeed a moral standard, but unlike what the second horn suggests, it is not external to God. Rather, it follows necessarily from God's nature.
 - His nature contains within it the perfect, non-arbitrary, moral standard. This means that an individual's actions (i.e. the killing of innocents) is not arbitrarily bad, because it follows from an objective, necessary, moral standard.
 - On the other hand, it does not mean God is somehow subservient to this standard because it is contained in His nature. It defines His nature; it is not in any way external to Him.
- A natural response: *"You must know what good is to define God as good, and therefore you haven't solved the problem."*
 - Simple reply: "God defines what good is. He is the only Being worthy of worship because He is the most perfect and moral Being."

Maximal Perfection & More Questions!

- Islam proclaims God's maximal perfection.
 - Maximal perfection is the view that God's reality and attributes are to the highest degree possible, without any deficiency and flaw. This echoed by the other religious traditions. C. A. Campbell explains:
 - **"Theism in general proclaims that God is wholly perfect; and, as is entirely natural, it interprets this Divine perfection in terms of "the highest we know" in human experience; applying to God accordingly, such concepts as those of goodness, wisdom and power in their highest manifestations."**
 - In the context of morality, God is perfectly good and the source of all goodness. If God did was not perfect, He would be flawed and deficient, which are the features of a contingent being.
- The following question can arise: *"Why does God define good and why is He the source of all goodness?"*
 - So far the metaphysical explanation that God is the source of all goodness and defines what is good is an adequate meta-ethical account of our intuitions about objective morality. To continue asking questions, like a form a question and answer infinite regress, is simple not how metaphysics is done. Once an adequate metaphysical explanation is presented, then it is sufficient. There needs to be some type of metaphysical stopping point.
 - This regress of questions can also be applied to non-theistic accounts of morality, or anything else for that matter, and they would be forced to reply in the same way. There needs to be an metaphysical explanatory stopping point, and for it to be considered as such it needs to adequately account for the phenomenon we are investigating.
 - *Philosophical naturalism or at least biological and non-theistic accounts for objective morality are not adequate.*
 - *Islamic theism provides the adequate metaphysical foundation for objective morals.*

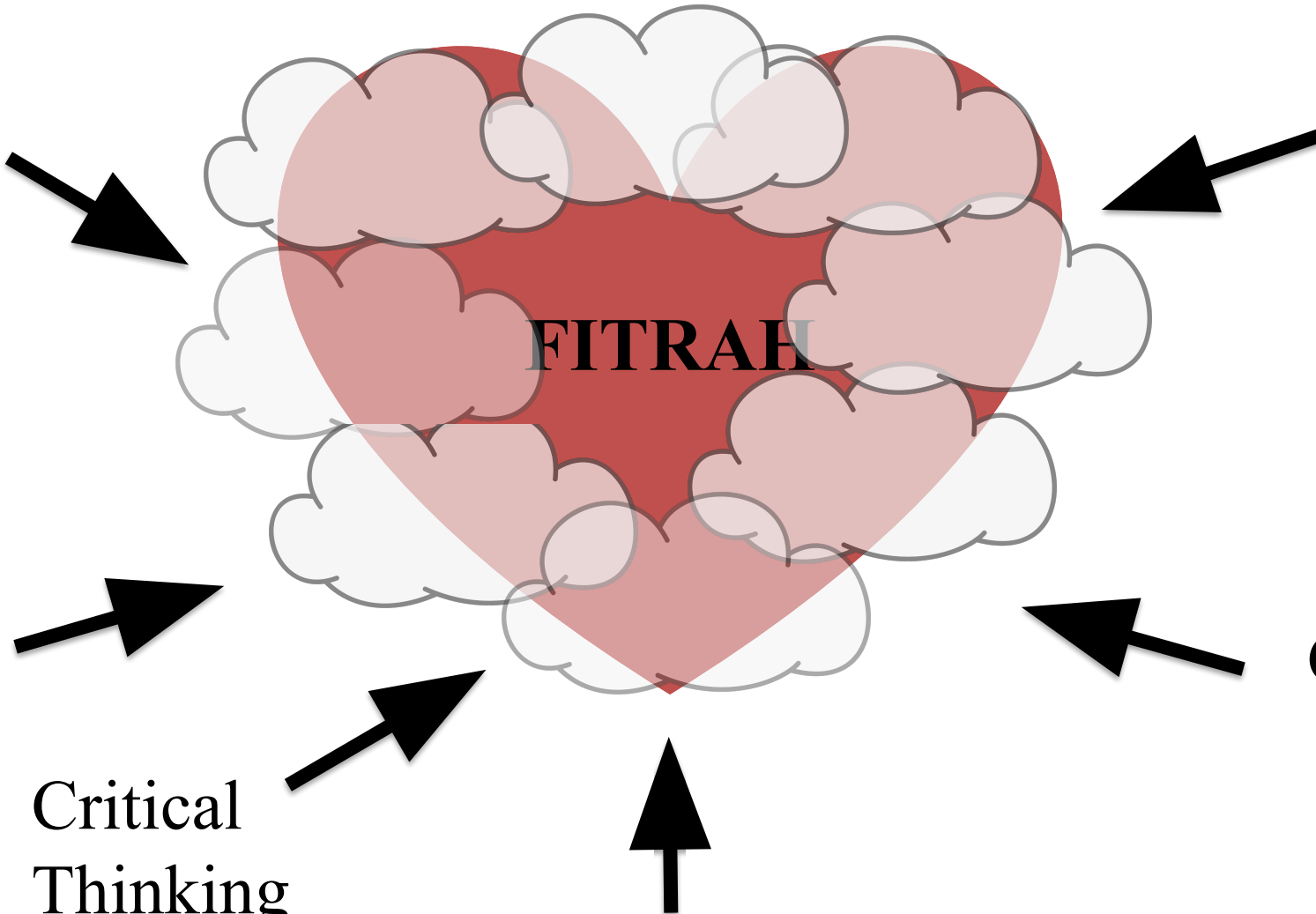
Approach #3 Revelation



Awakening the truth within

Revelation

Quranic beauty
Meaning
Verses
Tadabbur



Experiences

Natural beauty
Trauma
Positive experiences
Human relationships

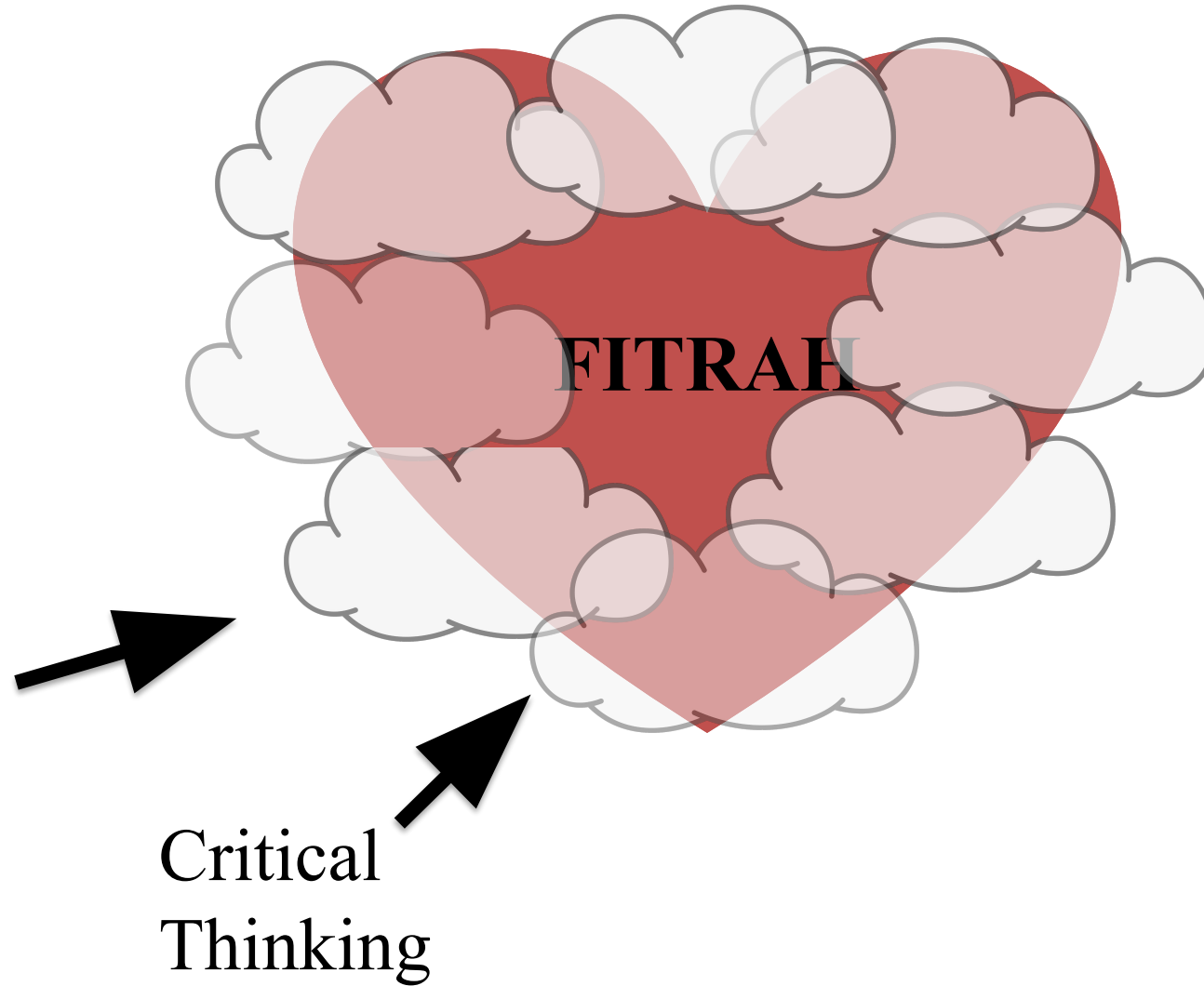
Rational Arguments

Critical Thinking

Character

Spirituality

Awakening the truth within



The concept

- The rational concept of Islam:
 - GORAP
 - God's existence
 - Oneness
 - Revelation
 - Adoration
 - Prophethood

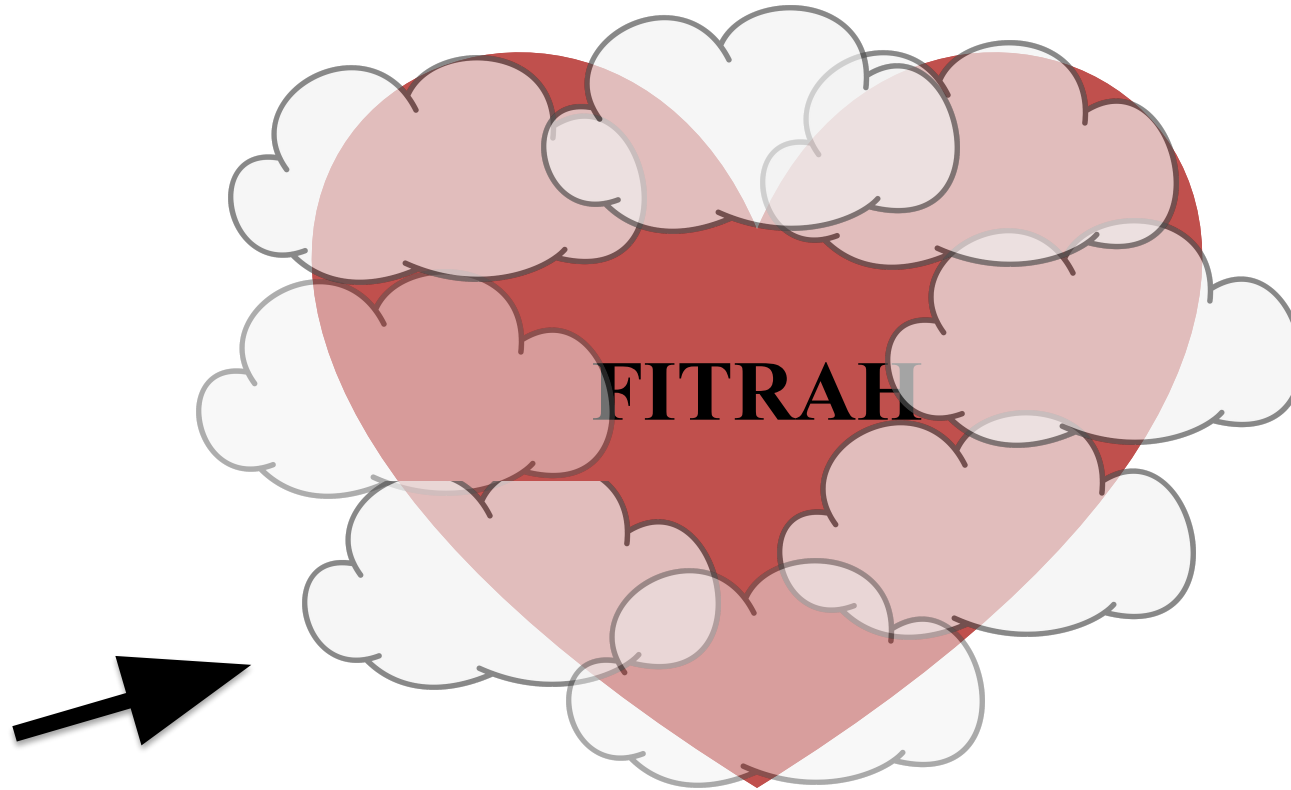


Revelation

- Possible arguments:
 - The inimitability of the Qur'an
 - The structural coherence of the Qur'an
 - The timeless nature of the Qur'an
- Possible structure:
 - Necessity of revelation:
 - *God seems to be invested in our flourishing, it makes sense He sent us revelation.*
 - Argument: the timeless nature of the Qur'an
 - Agreement: *does this make sense?*



Awakening the truth within

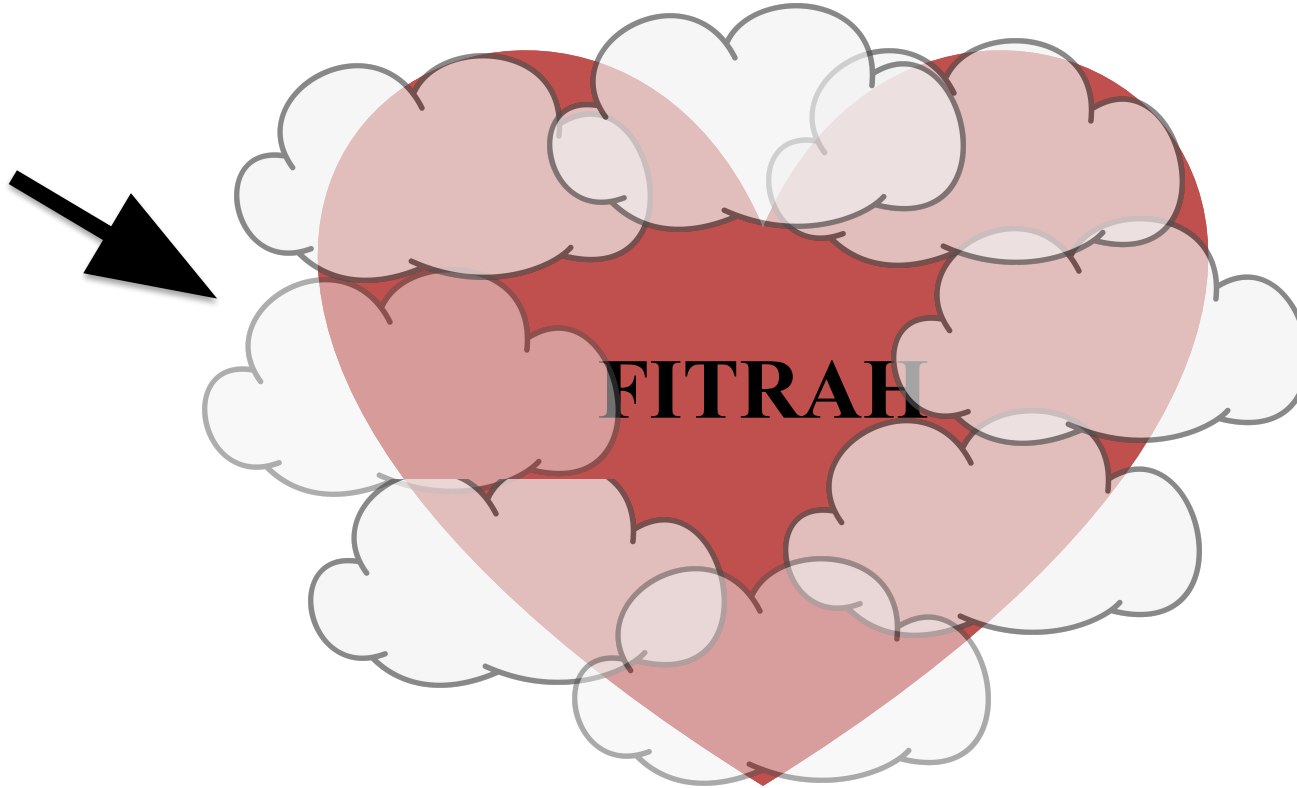


Rational
Arguments

Awakening the truth within

Revelation

Quranic beauty
Meaning
Verses
Tadabbur



The Effect of the Qur'an upon the Fitrah
i.e. the role of Ayat

The Effect of Ayat

The Human Being

- What makes you, you? Ontology of the Human
- *Ayah an-Noor*
- How do ayat function related to you as a being?

What's on the maidah?

- Stories - From mythos to logos: The Human Project
 - Adam: language and the rational mind
- Beauty: The experience of the Qur'an
 - *Fatiha*: Acoustics and meaning
- Christianity: Guaranteed paradise?
- The effect of the Qur'an on the world today.

Ontology of the Human

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

And be not like those who forgot Allah , so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.

The Qur'an, Chapter 59, Verse 19



Ontology of the Human - Patience

Angels → Light - obedience to Allah

Human → Light/Earthly

Animals → Earthly - desires

Ayah an-Noor

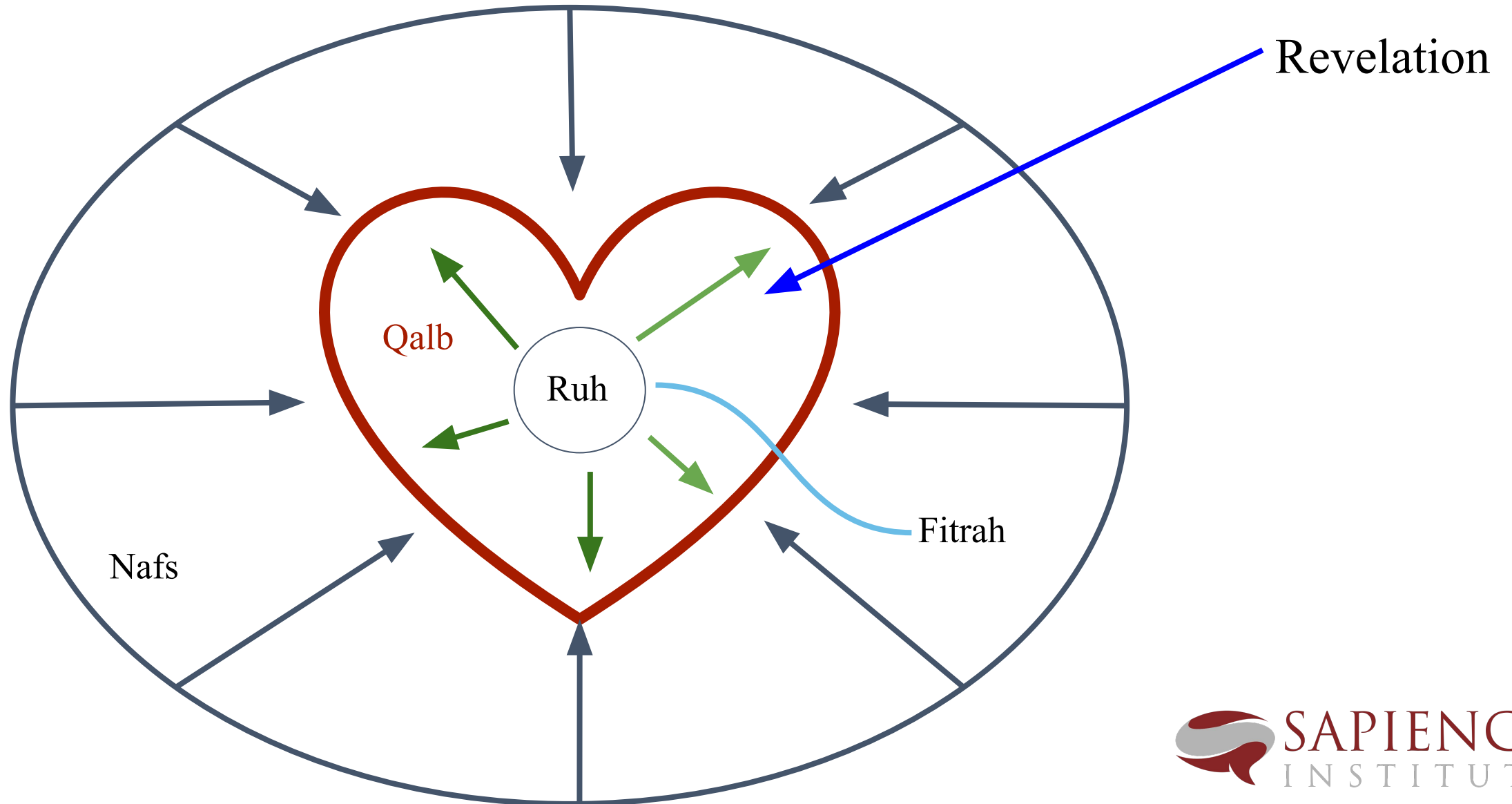


﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ
الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ
مُبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ
تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ
اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 24, Verse 35

Ayah an-Noor



How to Ayat Function?



Ayah (آية):

- No new information transfer
- Immediate

The Qur'an as a "Maidah"



أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

Does He not know what He created while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?

The Qur'an, Chapter 67, Verse 14

The Human Project

Mythos: A narration that explains the world.

- Narrative, story, word, conversation

Logos: A rational explanation of the world.

- Thinking, thought, reason, mind



The Human Project

“Concealed in the very heart of liberalism then are a set of legitimating myths about man and society: myths about human rights, the primacy of individuals, the equality of men (and even women), the naturalness of freedom, the feasibility of government by consent and the rest. While pretending to be statements about what the world and human beings are like, these have actually always been myths which supported attempts to change the world and to improve on nature. In other words, these beliefs were necessary because they were *not* self-evident. For human beings as we encounter them in the world are very unlike the traditional liberal picture of them. They are not equal, not free and far from being distinct individuals in control of their destinies...”

Conovan, Margret,, *“On Being Economical with the Truth: Some Liberal Reflections”*.
University of Keele, pp. 13.

The Human Project

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

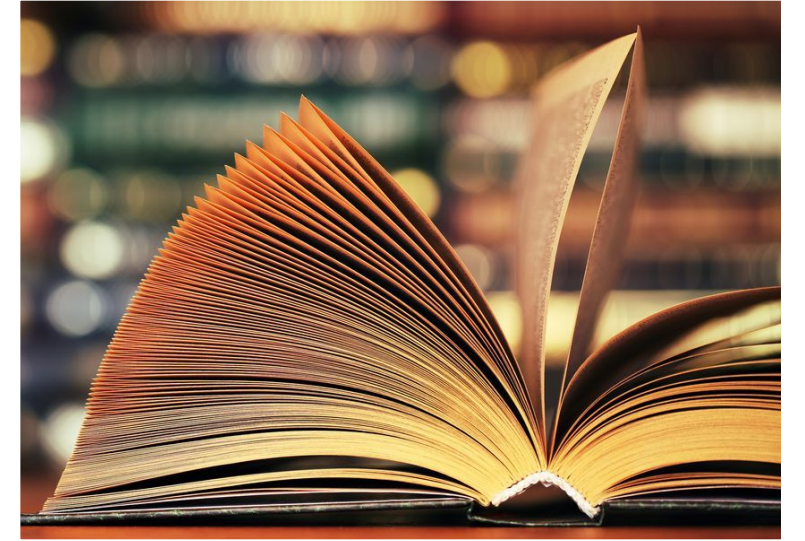
Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an that you might understand.

The Qur'an, Chapter 18, Verse 5

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٣﴾

We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur'an although you were, before it, among the unaware.

The Qur'an, Chapter 18, Verse 6



The Human Project



Navid Kermani: *“While the root h-s-n covers a semantic field from (morally) good to (outwardly) beautiful, jamil is more clearly an aesthetic category that almost always refers to the sensory impression of a phenomenon.”* *Navid Kermani. God is Beautiful, p. 16.*

The Human Project

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ جَاعِلٌ فِی الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةًۭۙۙ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَۙۙ قَالَ اِنِّیْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.” They said, “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?” Allah said, “Indeed, I know that which you do not know.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 30*

The Human Project

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ
أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, “Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 31*

The Human Project

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾

They said, “Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 32*

The Human Project

قَالَ يٰٓآدَمُ اٰنۡبِئْهُمۡ بِاَسۡمَآئِهِمۡ ۖ فَلَمَّآ اٰنۡبَاَهُمۡ بِاَسۡمَآئِهِمۡ قَالَ اَلَمۡ اَقُلۡ
لَّكُمۡ اِنۡنِىۡۤ اَعۡلَمُ غَيۡبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ وَاَعۡلَمُ مَا تُبۡدُوۡنَ وَمَا
كُنۡتُمْ تَكۡنُھُوۡنَ ﴿۳۳﴾

He said, “O Adam, inform them of their names.” And when he had informed them of their names,
He said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I
know what you reveal and what you have concealed.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 33*

The Human Project



“The name of things.”

The Human Project

“It is in the end the pagans’ verdict from sūrat al- Qamar, the verdict of his sihr al-bayān, his transformation of the world into a sign system transcending empirical reality, that is allowed to epitomize the Qur’an’s hermeneutical achievement.”

Tyeer, S. “The Qur’an and the Aesthetics of Premodern Arabic Prose” - Forward ix, Forward by Angelika Neuwirth (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

The Qur'an as a "Maidah"



أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

Does He not know what He created while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?

The Qur'an, Chapter 67, Verse 14

The Experience of the Qur'an



الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢

The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

The Qur'an, Chapter 1, Verse 3

Example: Christians / Jews

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ
النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

Say, [O Muhammad], “If the home of the Hereafter with Allah is for you alone and not the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 94



The Effect of the Qur'an on the World



The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing

Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar fī Ḥisāb al-Jabr wal-Muqābalah

“Imam al-Ma'mun, the Commander of the Faithful....has encouraged me to compose a short work on calculating by (the rules of) completion and balancing, confining it to what is easiest and most useful in arithmetic, such as men constantly require in cases of inheritance, legacies, partition, law-suits and trade...”

Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī

Link to Dawah

Using Ayat in your dawah:

- **Know more quran**
- **Be able to use it appropriately**

Approach #4 Experience



The Value of Experience



Mary's Room*

**See Jackson, Frank, "Epiphenomenal Qualia", The Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 127. (Apr., 1982)*

The Value of Experience



فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا أَنْ
يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ
نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

“Those who remained behind rejoiced in their staying [at home] after [the departure of] the Messenger of Allah and disliked to strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah and said, 'Do not go forth in the heat.' Say, "The fire of Hell is more intensive in heat" - if they would but understand.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 9, Verse 81*

Experience

Outline

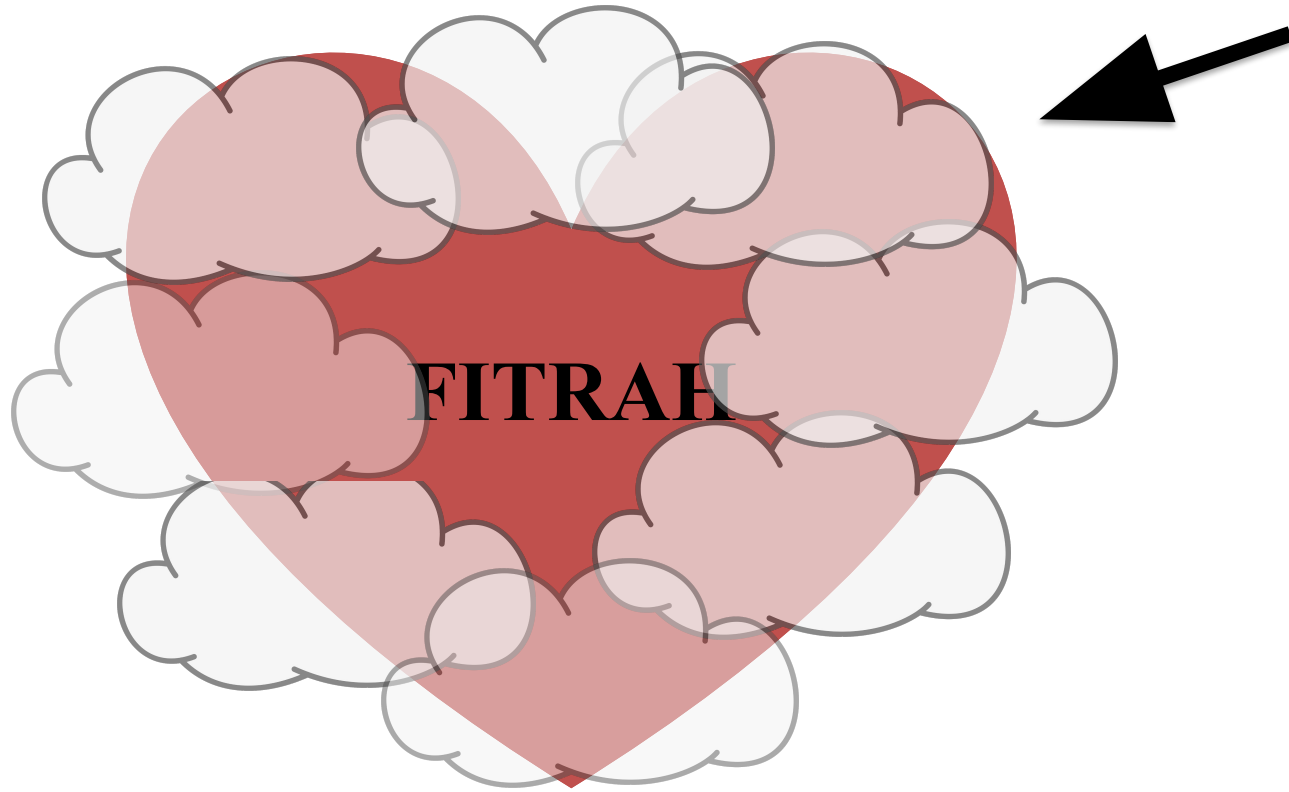
- Positive Experiences - Beauty
- Negative Experiences - Trauma
- Spiritual Experiences - Fasting



Positive Experience - Beauty



Awakening the truth within

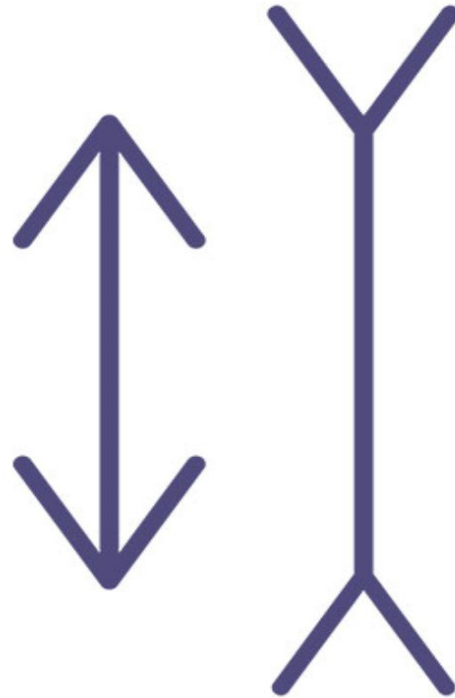


Positive Experiences

Exposure to Natural beauty can uncloud the fitrah by invoking awe. Awe leads to higher cognition and lowered ego.

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust yourself?

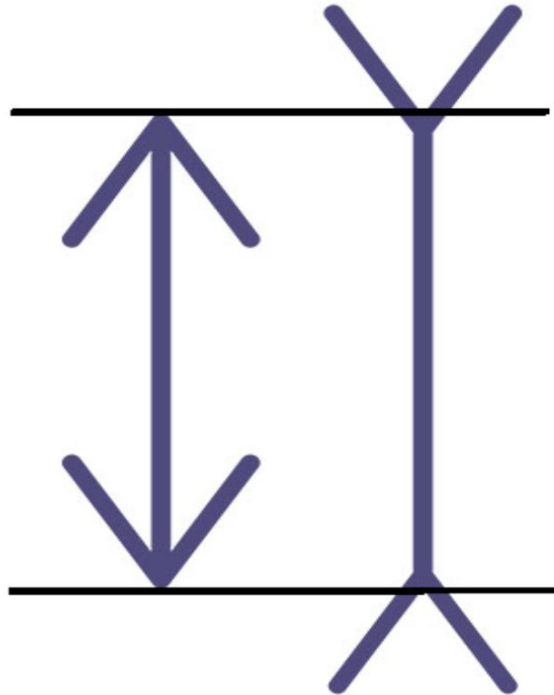
Is seeing truth a function of the individual cognition only? Do your surroundings have an impact on your cognition?



Franz Müller- Lyer

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust yourself?

Is seeing truth a function of the individual and his/her rationality only? Do your surroundings have an impact on your cognition?



Franz Müller- Lyer

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust yourself?

Franz Müller- Lyer Illusion is NOT universal

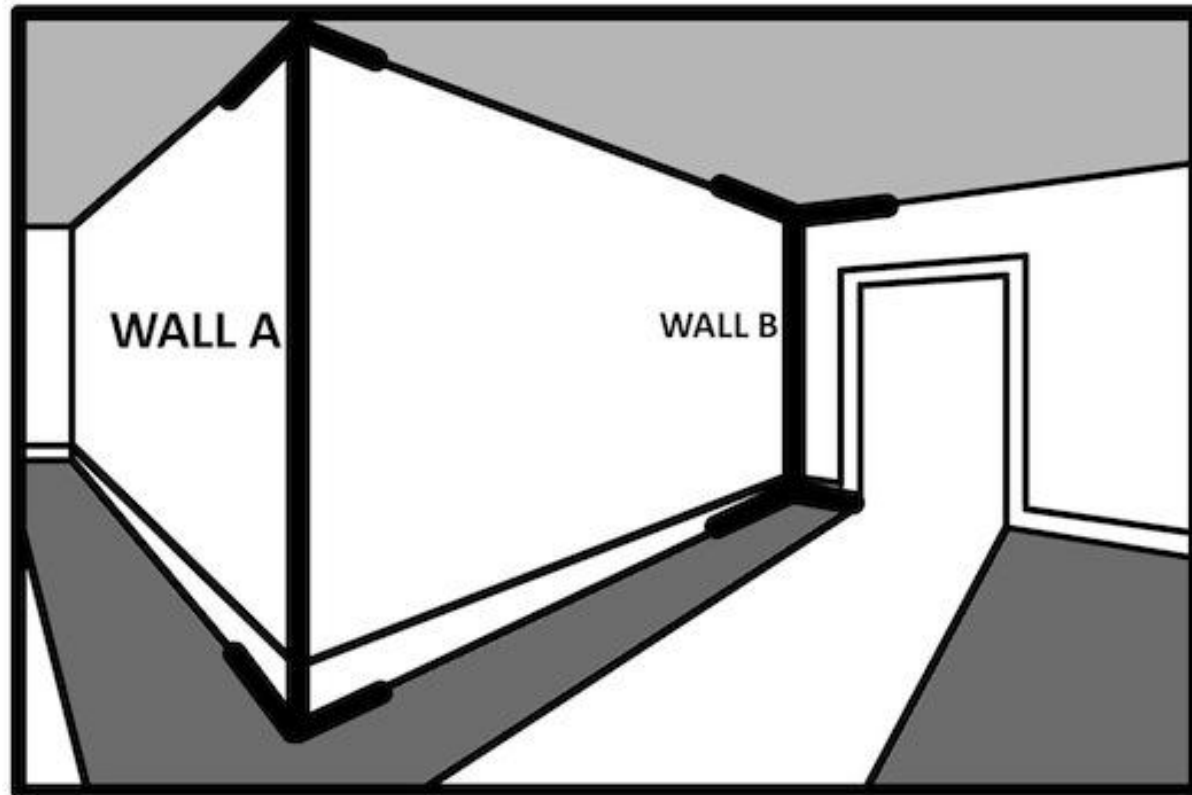
- Suku Tribe (Northern Angola)
- Bete Tribe (Ivory Coast)

WEIRD:

- Western
- Educated
- Industrialized
- Rich
- Democratic

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust yourself?

Is seeing truth a function of the individual and his/her rationality only?



Cognitive Bias - Can you trust yourself?



Cognitive Bias - Can you trust yourself?



Pre-Modern



Modern



Post-Modern

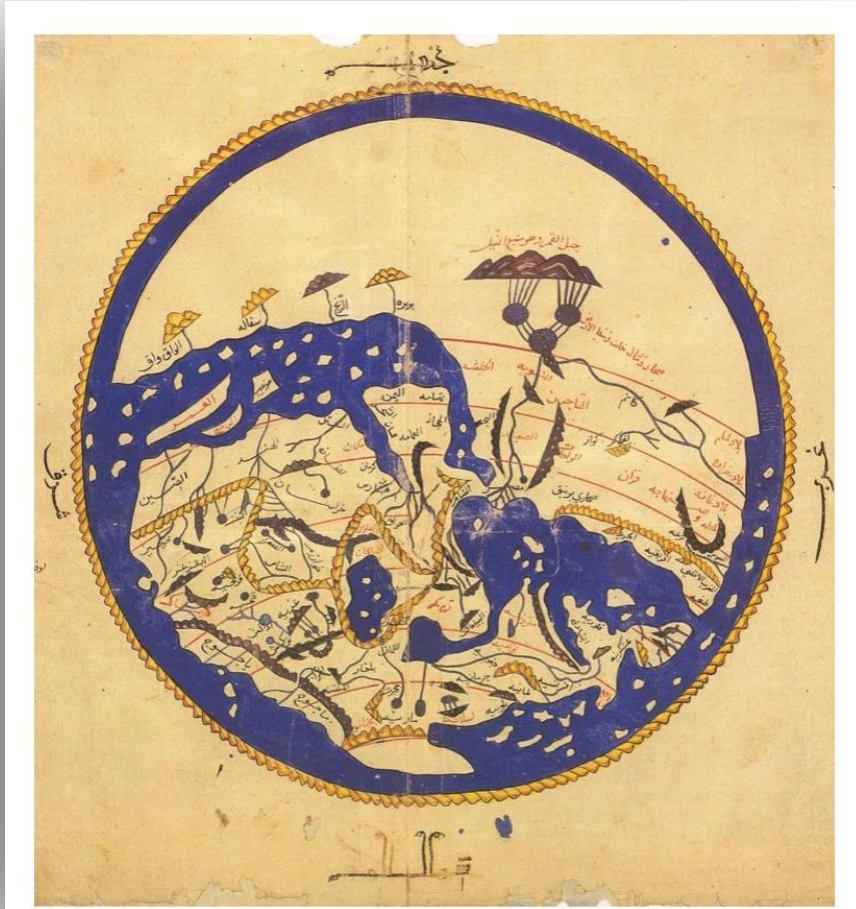
Your environment can have an impact on your cognition.

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust OTHERS?



Cognitive Bias - Can you trust OTHERS?

South



East

West

Muhammad al-Idrisi

12th Century
Geographer / Cartographer

North

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust OTHERS?

A photograph of Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the glowing city lights of the Northern Hemisphere at night. The sun is visible on the horizon, creating a bright glow.

IS NORTH ALWAYS UP?

Cognitive Bias - Can you trust OTHERS?



Cognitive Bias - Can you trust OTHERS?

“We reported seven studies that demonstrate that the metaphoric association between cardinal direction and vertical position is pervasive and consequential. Indeed, information about cardinal direction can affect consumers’ judgments of time, effort, and cost. Specifically, because they associate north with up and south with down, consumers expect northbound travel to be more time-consuming (Study 1), less convenient (Studies 4 and 5), and costlier (Studies 2, 3a, 3b, and 6) than southbound travel. ”

Nelson, L.D., and Simmons, J.P. (2009) “On southbound ease and northbound fees: Literal consequences of the metaphoric link between vertical position and cardinal direction” Journal of Marketing Research, Pg. 46

Central Thesis

1. EXPOSURE TO (NATURAL) BEAUTY CAN HELP US DECREASE COGNITIVE BIASES.
2. EXPOSURE TO (NATURAL) BEAUTY CAN HELP US DECREASE EGO.

Conceptualizing Beauty

*Roger Scruton's "Platitudes"**

1. Beauty Pleases us.
2. One thing can be more beautiful than another
3. Beauty is always a reason for attending to the thing that possesses it.
4. Beauty is the subject-matter of a judgement: the judgement of taste.
5. The judgement of taste is about the beautiful object, not about the subject's state of mind.
6. Nevertheless, there are no second-hand judgements of beauty.

**See Scruton, R. "Beauty: A Very Short Introduction" - Chapter 1 (Oxford University Press 2011)*

Conceptualizing Beauty

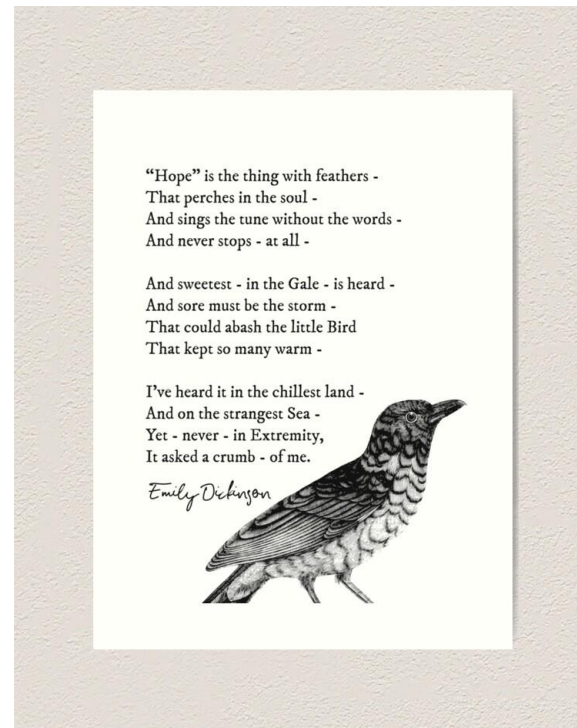
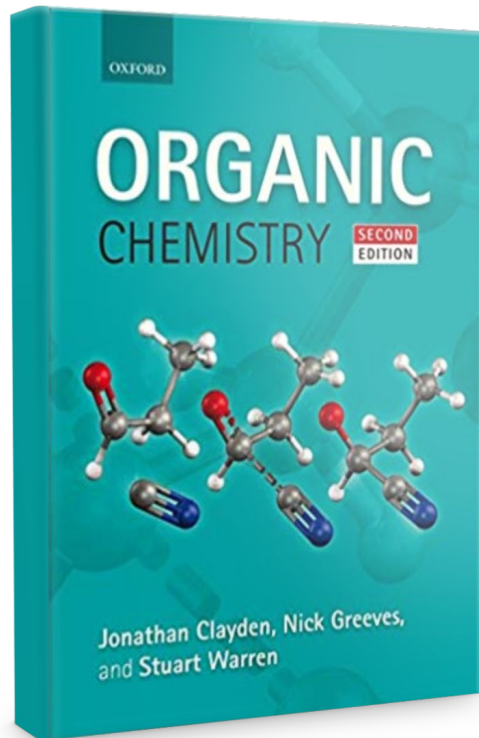
Beauty is connected to meaning → it points to something deeper



Aesthetic vs. Utilitarian Interests

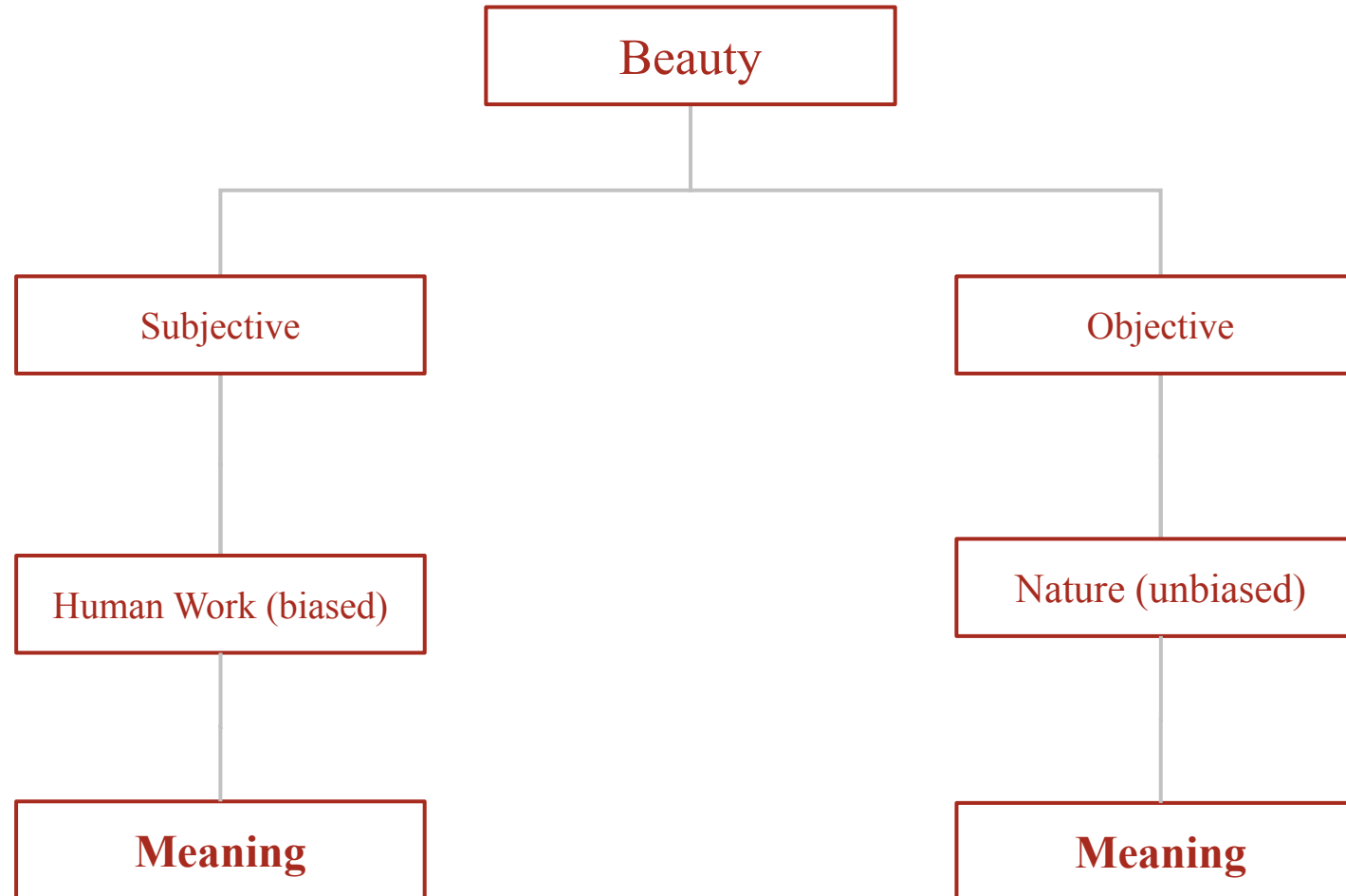
Conceptualizing Beauty

Beauty is connected to meaning → it points to something deeper



Prose vs. Poetry

Man-made Beauty vs. Natural Beauty



Experience of Natural Beauty



Experience of Natural Beauty



Experience of Natural Beauty

Painting/Picture of Nature

- Framing
- Human angle/bias

Nature

- Vast, Open, Endless
- No Human angle/bias - Direct Experience
- Not contained
- Makes you feel small

Central Thesis

1. EXPOSURE TO (NATURAL) BEAUTY CAN HELP US DECREASE COGNITIVE BIASES.
2. EXPOSURE TO (NATURAL) BEAUTY CAN HELP US DECREASE EGO.

Experiences of Natural Beauty: AWE

“Awe has been defined as an emotional response to perceptually vast stimuli that overwhelm current mental structures, yet facilitate attempts at accommodation.”

Michelle N. Shiota and Dacher Keltner (University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA) “The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept”

Experience of Natural Beauty: AWE

Awe leads to decreased EGO and heightened cognition

Impediments to Truth:

- Ego / Arrogance
- Lowered Cognition



Experience of Natural Beauty: AWE

Awe leads to decreased EGO and heightened cognition

From 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud *radiallahu 'anhu* who said that the Prophet *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam* said,

"No one will enter Paradise who has an atom's weight of arrogance in his heart."

A man said, "What if a man likes his clothes to look good and his shoes to look good?"

He said, ***"Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance means denying the truth and looking down on people."***

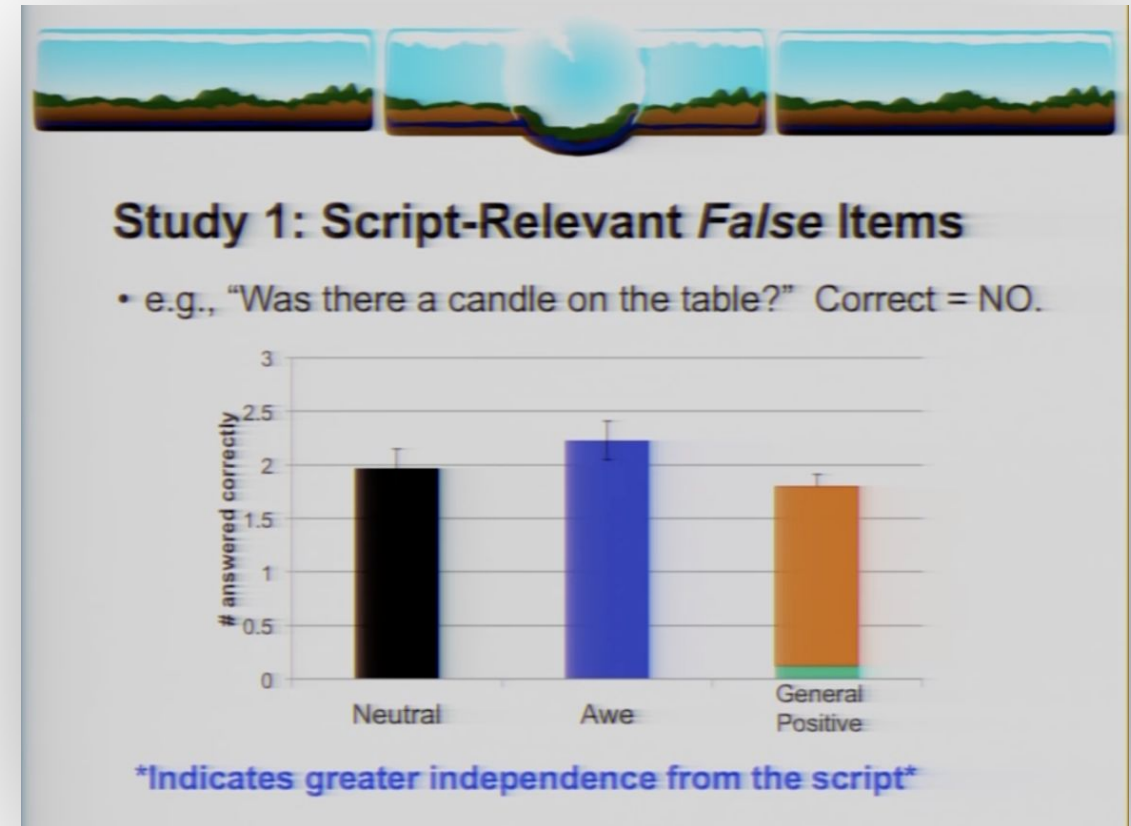
Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 131

Experiences of Natural Beauty: AWE

Effect of Awe on Cognition

“Was there a candle on the table?”

Correct = NO.



Michelle N. Shiota and Dacher Keltner (University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA) “The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept”

Experiences of Natural Beauty: AWE

Effect of Awe on Ego

- From self interest to collective interest
- From isolated self to integrated self
- Break down us vs. them thinking



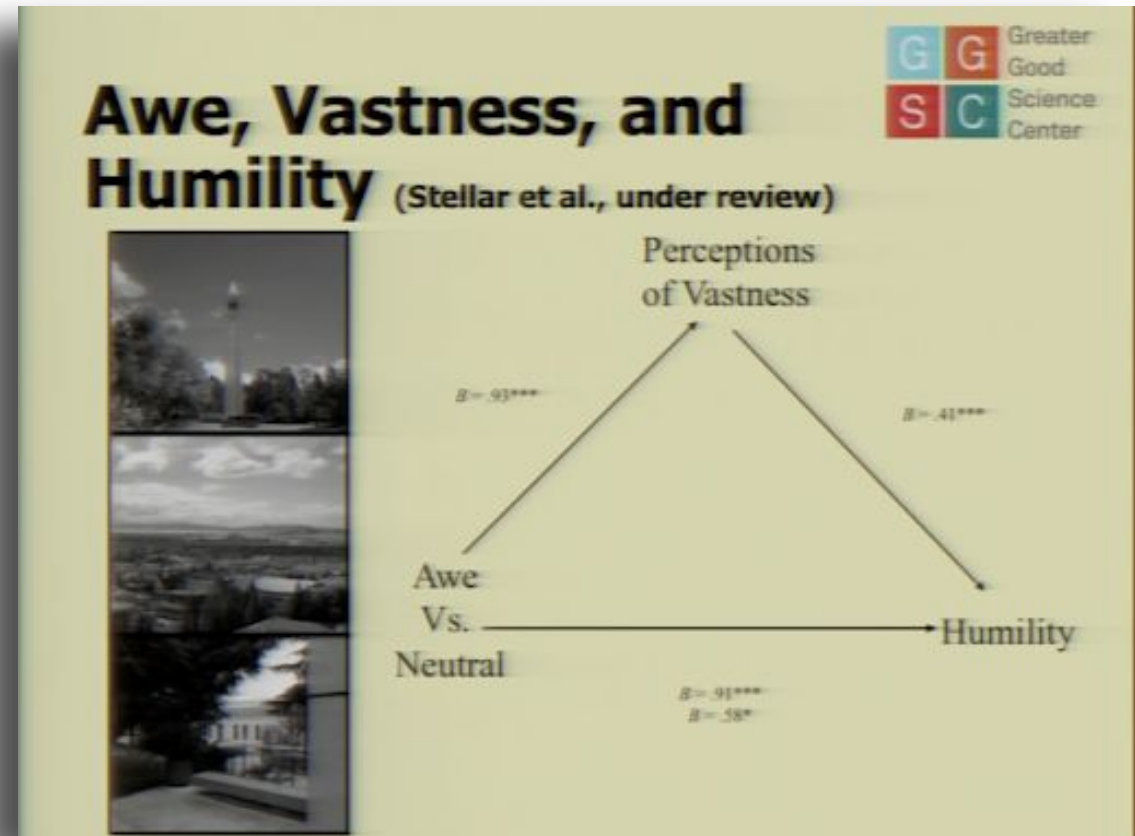
Michelle N. Shiota and Dacher Keltner (University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA) “The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept”

Experiences of Natural Beauty: AWE

Awe amplifies Humility

“Awe and small self”

Subjects asked to draw themselves in cosmopolitan environments and mountainous environments.



Michelle N. Shiota and Dacher Keltner (University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA) “The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept”

Link to Dawah

1. How can Natural Beauty uncloud the fitrah?
 - a. Firstly natural beauty facilitates awe, increases cognition and decreases the ego - which facilitates Divine guidance and mercy.
 - b. So in the context of the dawah you should arrange meetings or reflection on natural beauty, such as camping under the stars or going for a walk in an natural environment.
 - c. Then they can have that experience and you can say...
2. You can use the other approaches in combinations, such as GORAP, Critical Thinking and Revelation. And when you are using the approaches you can do it in a setting of natural beauty or getting them to reflect on natural beauty in the context of the other approaches... specifically when using GORAP you can use references to natural beauty that is in your surroundings. Remember in natural beauty facilitates awe which decreases the ego and increases cognition
3. My experience

Negative Experience - Trauma



Various Types

- Calamities
- Death of a loved one
- Loss of health
- Financial problems
- Immediate threat to death



General Strategy

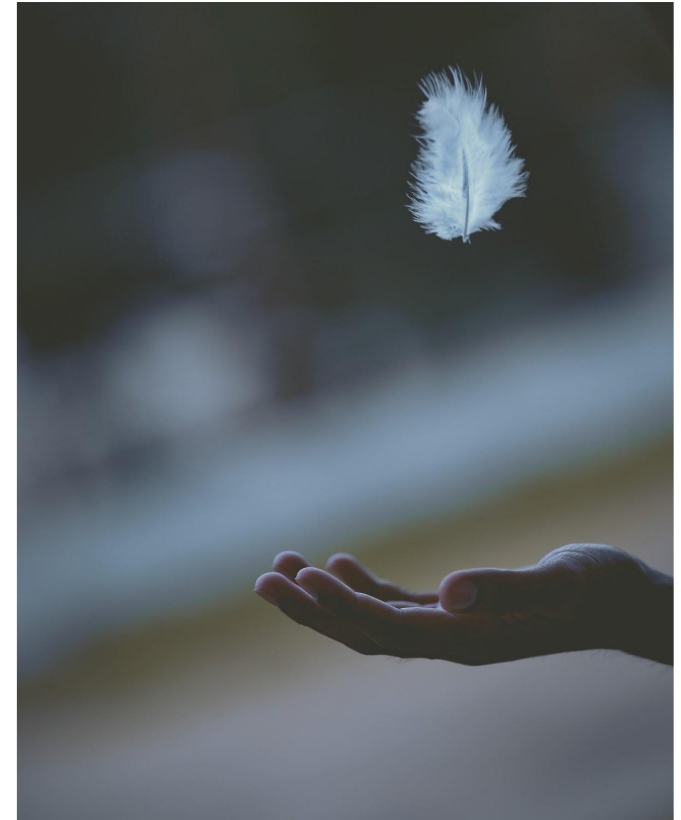
- Suffering can be a way of:
 - Making us realise we have strengths we never thought we had
 - Bring us closer with loved ones or create profound new relationships
 - Evoke gratitude and greater appreciation for life
 - Reinforce or change our beliefs
 - Make us realise that we have, and can pursue, new possibilities

Change the Meaning

- Our negative meaning
- Allah's meaning
 - “He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 67, Verse 2*
- According to the Islamic tradition God has created us so that we may worship and draw near to Him.
 - A fundamental principle concerning this is that we must detach ourselves from the ephemeral nature of the world.
 - Suffering shows us how truly low the dunyā is, thereby facilitating our detachment from it. Thus we are able to draw closer to God.
 - The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was reported to have said that, “Love of the dunyā is the root of all evil.” *Bayhaqi's Shu'ab al-Iman*

Change the Meaning

- “Surely with every difficulty there is relief.
Surely with every difficulty there is relief.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 94, Verse 5 and 6*
- “Anyone who dies of the plague is a martyr.
Anyone who dies of a stomach illness is a martyr.
Anyone who drowns is a martyr.” *Sahih Muslim*
- “Nothing afflicts the believer, whether fatigue, grief, disease - even a worry that concerns him - except that by it, Allah removes something from his bad deeds.” *Narrated by Tirmidhi*



Change the Meaning

- “Do you think that you will enter paradise without any trials while you have known the examples of those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with suffering and adversity and were so violently shaken up that even the Prophet and the believers with him cried out: ‘When will God’s help come?’ Be aware, God’s help is close.” *The Qur’an, Chapter 2, Verse 214*
- All believers who suffered will be granted eternal bliss, and all the suffering they had – even if they suffered all of their life – would be forgotten forever.
 - The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “Then the person who had suffered the most affliction in the world of those destined for Paradise will be brought forth and merely dipped into Paradise for a moment. Then he will be asked ‘O son of Adam, have you ever seen suffering? Have you ever experienced hardship in your life?’ He will reply ‘No my Lord, by God. I have never undergone suffering. I have never seen hardship.’” *Sahih Muslim*

Link to Dawah

1. Speak about your own personal trauma that is similar to theirs or sympathize with them. Also, if there has been a trauma related to a community event (e.g. lockdown, winter storm, etc.)
2. How can Trauma uncloud the fitrah?
 - a. Firstly ask them to stand in the possibility that there is a different meaning to the trauma.
 - b. Then ask them to stand in the possibility that the true meaning of the trauma has a connection with one's answers to existential questions.
 - c. Propose the meaning of the trauma as outlined in the Islamic sources but link it to One God being the only one worthy of worship.

Spiritual Experiences



Ontology of the Soul - Review



﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ
الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ
مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ
تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ
اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 24, Verse 35

Connecting Spiritual Acts

أَمَّنْهُوَ قَنْتٌءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةً
رَّبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾



“Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 39, Verse 9

Example of Spiritual Experience: Fasting

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ
الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾

“And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul. Say, "The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little.””

The Qur'an, Chapter 17, Verse 85

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ
فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

“Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 117



Example of Spiritual Experience: Fasting

- Inviting someone to Fast
- Explaining the connection of Fasting to Spirituality
- Exposure to the Qur'an (See section on Revelation)
- Witness Tarawīh Prayers
- Worship the one true god true? Stand in the possibility.



#5 Character



Islam's Spread: SE Asia

“From the 13th through the 17th century, Sunni Islam, carried chiefly by Arab and Indian merchants, spread widely through peninsular and insular Southeast Asia. The new religion offered equal-opportunity social advancement through spiritual devotion, which ultimately challenged (but did not entirely eliminate) the power of the traditional elites; Islam also embodied a complex theology that held much appeal for farmers and merchants in the coastal regions. The dissemination of Islam was intimately linked to the florescence of the great [Indian Ocean trading](#) routes that connected China through the Strait of Malacca to India, the Middle East, and eastern Africa.”

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Malaysia/The-advent-of-Islam>

Character?

- Moral character
- Commitment to their wellbeing
- Lifestyle
- Wisdom



Moral Character

- **Sincerely displaying a moral behaviour and speech that inspires people to be like you and to adopt the way of life and beliefs that motivate your character.**
- NB: Refer back to week 1
 - Forbearance - Prophet carrying luggage
 - Compassion
 - Kindness
 - Sincerity
 - Selfless giving
 - At service to others
 - Not breaking principles for any personal gain - No compromise!



Commitment to their wellbeing

- “Love for humanity what you love for yourself.” + “You will not truly believe until...”
- Sincerely and actively (+ proactively) want goodness and guidance for them.



Commitment to their wellbeing

- Social Service Projects e.g. Check cashing/payday loans.
- Justice Hierarchy - Social Justice
- Who is better in speech? Don't forget “I am from among the Muslims” !



Commitment to their wellbeing

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

“Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, does righteous deeds and says indeed I am among the Muslims.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 41, Verse 33

Lifestyle

- Prayer
- Family
- Friends
- Social activities
- Health
- Wealth



Wisdom



- Connected to commitment to their wellbeing
- Give sincerely Islamic advice on:
 - Life
 - Morality
 - Friendship
 - Problems

#6 Spirituality



Spirituality: An Introduction to Worship

a. Everyone worships

Who is worthy of worship?

b. Acts of worship as a means to awaken the fitrah

c. The hereafter



What is Worship?

- To know God
- Love God
- Obey God
 - Humility
 - Fear
- Single out and direct all acts of worship to God alone
 - Gratitude, praise, prayer, charity, supplication, etc.

“It is You we worship and You we ask for help.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 1, Verse 5

Universalise

- To know God
- Love God
- Obey God
 - Humility
 - Fear
- Single out and direct all acts of worship to God alone
 - Gratitude, praise, prayer, charity, supplication, etc.

“It is You we worship and You we ask for help.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 1, Verse 5

a. Everyone worships



Was there something at any moment in your life...

...you wanted to **know** about the most?

...you **loved** the most?

...you **obeyed** or referred to the most?

...you expressed ultimate **gratitude** or **praised** the most?

That was your object of worship

- Examples:
 - Your self (ego)
 - Other people
 - Ideology
 - Materialism



Example

Know: Know the history of your nation and ethnic group the most, study your nation's history the most

Love: Love the nation, its history and ethnic group the most to the degree it destroys natural relationships and skews ethics

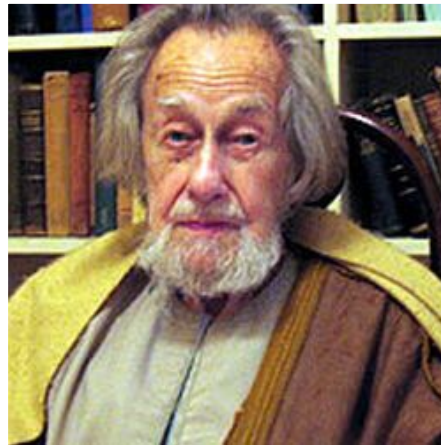
Obey: Refer to the dictates of a nationalist ideology and its leaders, refer to the rules and obligations related to nationalism

Acts of worship: extensively praise the nation's history and its present state, including nationalist symbols and leaders more than anything

“Man cannot not worship”

“Equipped as he is by his very nature for worship, **man cannot not worship**; and if his outlook is cut off from the spiritual plane, he will find a God to worship at some lower level, thus endowing something relative with what belongs only to the Absolute... **The desire for freedom is above all the desire for God, absolute freedom being an essential aspect of Divinity.**”

Martin Lings, *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions*. Suhail Academy, pp. 45 - 46.



Everyone Worships

Man cannot not worship:

“God puts forward this illustration: can a man who has several partners for his masters, of which they are at odds with each other, be considered equal to a man devoted wholly to one master? All praise belongs to God, though most of them do not know.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 39, Verse 29*

“Have you not seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 45, Verse 23*

Worshipping God liberates your soul from being enslaved to these *several masters*.

What is Worship?

- To know God
- Love God
- Obey God
 - Humility
 - Fear
- Single out and direct all acts of worship to God alone
 - Gratitude, praise, prayer, charity, supplication, etc.

“It is You we worship and You we ask for help.”

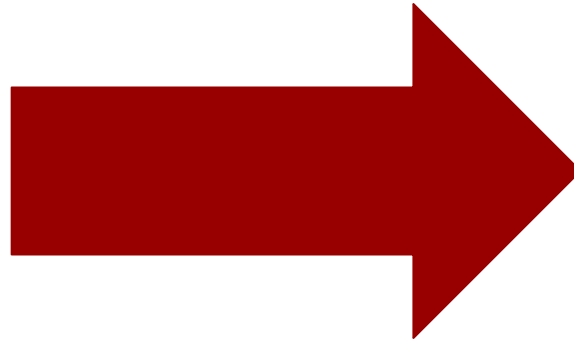
The Qur'an, Chapter 1, Verse 5

The Quranic Strategy

And We sent not before you any messenger that We revealed to him that, “There is no deity except Me, so worship Me..”

The Qur'an, Chapter 21, Verse 25

**God's
Creative
Power**



**God's
Divinity**

Knowing God

“So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 47, Verse 19

- **Oneness of His Creative Power:**
 - God is the sole, unique creator, sustainer, maintainer and owner of everything that exists.
- **Oneness of His Names and Attributes:**
 - God's names and attributed are unique, transcendent and they are maximally perfect. They have no deficiency or flaw and are to the highest degree possible.
- **Oneness of His Divinity:**
 - God is worthy of our worship. He is worthy of our obedience, love, prayers, praise and thanks. He is the only deity worthy of worship. All acts of worship are singled out, and dedicated to Him alone.

Why Worship God?

1. God's right to worship is a necessary fact of His existence:

“Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 20, Verse 14*

2. God has created and also sustains everything:

“O mankind, remember the favour of God upon you. Is there any creator other than God who provides for you from the heaven and Earth? There is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?” *The Qur'an, Chapter 35, Verse 3*

3. God provides us with innumerable favours:

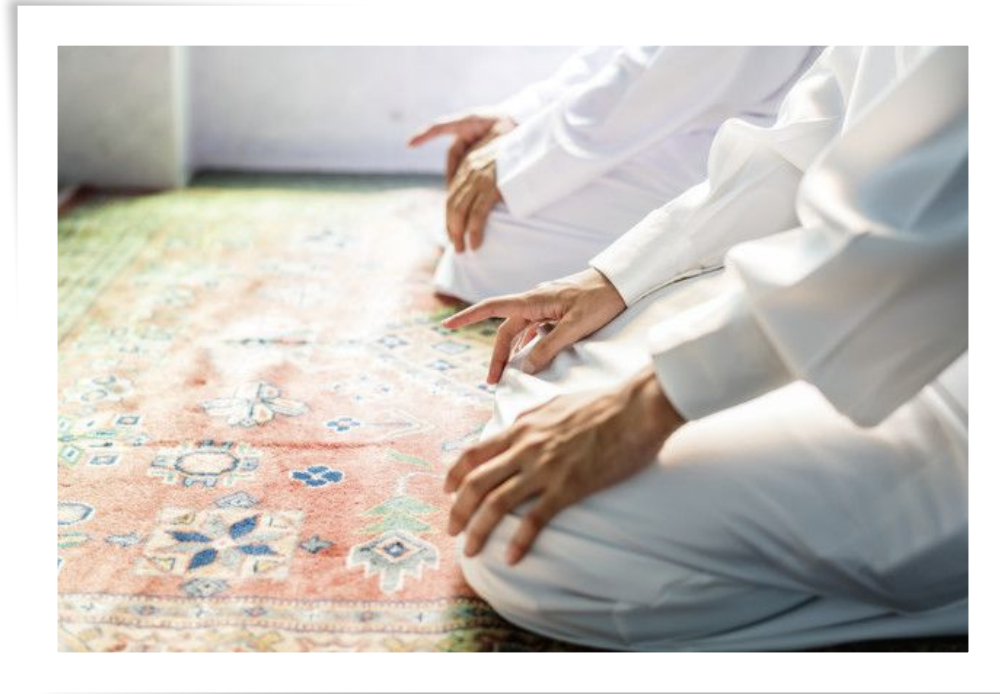
“And if you should [try to] count the favours of God, you could not enumerate them. Indeed mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful.”

The Qur'an, Chapter 14, Verse 34

b. Acts of worship



Prayer, reflection, Quran and *dhikr*



Engaging with acts of worship as a means to uncloud the fitrah

Spirituality: Al-Akhira

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah . Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." *The Qur'an, Chapter 39, Verse 53*

If you disbelieve - indeed, Allah is Free from need of you. And He does not approve for His servants disbelief. And if you are grateful, He approves it for you; and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you about what you used to do. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts. *The Qur'an, Chapter 39, Verse 7*



Shahadah



Shahadah



- Make the invitation
 - A formal invitation
 - Be sincere
- Remember: guidance is in Allah's control
- The shahadah is a commitment based on knowledge:
 - Commitment to worship Allah alone
 - Commitment to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as our example and guide on how to live a life that is pleasing to Allah.

Unclouding the fitrah

- So we have covered the different approaches to uncloud the fitrah, remember there are not standalone approaches, they can be used in combination.
- Significantly, when using one approach, during the conversation you may have indicators that the approach you have used is not the correct one, or that it will only take you so far, you can change approach mid-way.
- For example, when discussing GORAP you may find yourself stuck on a very small complex philosophical issue. The need for hair splitting may be an indication that another approach needs to be used.
 - You can change strategy and focus on spirituality and link in a way that is not an abrupt shift of the conversation
 - Also, know that the conversation can be over period of time...

Hidaya

- Remember that hidaya is from Allah, we cannot guide anyone, we just have to do our bit and leave the rest to Allah

“And the duty of the Messenger is only to convey (the Message) plainly.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 29, Verse 18*

“Verily, you (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided.” *The Qur'an, Chapter 39, Verse 7*

- This session is not a full course on shahadah but pointers and a key strategy to adopt when dealing with new muslims, in the course notes or slides you be provided with links to further training

Shahadah

- Always make the invitation. If you don't ask you will not get. The final push should be a motivation that is inline with the individuals personality and context.
 - This depends on the approach or combination of approaches you have used.
 - For example, if you used GORAP and spirituality you can say:
 - “Since you have agreed that Islam makes sense and give the fact that whatever comes from truth is true then the natural step is to accept this truth. God's door to His special love and mercy and guidance is open. We, you, just have to walk through it. He doesn't require perfection, just a sincere heart. Life is short, death awaits everyone, this decision is to certainty in the hope of bliss in the hereafter, and contentment in this life. Are you ready to accept this truth that you have already affirmed?

New Muslim Plan

- The focus shifts completely on this person. All dawah activities should be stopped.
- If they can't stay for longer pass on your details
- If they can stop any dawah or activities and take them to a local mosque and start to teach them how to do wudu and pray
- If there isn't a mosque nearby take them for a coffee and focus your interaction based on the following strategy
- Other ideas:
 - Connecting them with a mentor, to the masjid, stay in regular contacts with them and make du'a for them.
 - Get them in touch with trusted organisations, but don't outsource and ignore. Oversee, manage and support.
 - Remember! Committed to their wellbeing!
- Advice.
 - Welcome them, take it gradually (step by step), be prepared for this journey, assure them of your support.

Post Shahadah Priorities and Strategy

- Focus on who Allah is, connecting with Allah, ease and unity.
 - This is based on three narrations and two verses:
 - Verily, you are coming to a people among the people of the Book, so call them to testify there is no God but Allah and I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has obligated five prayers in each day and night. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has obligated charity to be taken from the rich and given to the poor. (Sahih Muslim)
 - Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not repel people. Cooperate with each other and do not become divided. (Sahih Bukhari)
 - Aisha (ra): If the first thing to be revealed was: 'Do not drink alcoholic drinks,' people would have said, 'We will never leave alcoholic drinks,' and if there had been revealed, 'Do not commit illegal sexual intercourse,' they would have said, 'We will never give up illegal sexual intercourse.' (Bukhari)
 - keep up the prayer: prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behaviour. Remembering God is greater: God knows everything you are doing. Q29:45
 - Praying regularly enables a person to give up immoral behaviour and evil deeds
 - Ibn Awn Al-Ansari said: “when you are praying, you are doing good, it is keeping you away from immoral sins and evil wicked deeds and what you are doing is part of the remembrance of Allah which is greater.”
 - [How] prosperous are the believers! Those who pray humbly. Q23:1-2
 - One meaning is that they are blessed